EVENT HORIZON

WINTER 1980-'81
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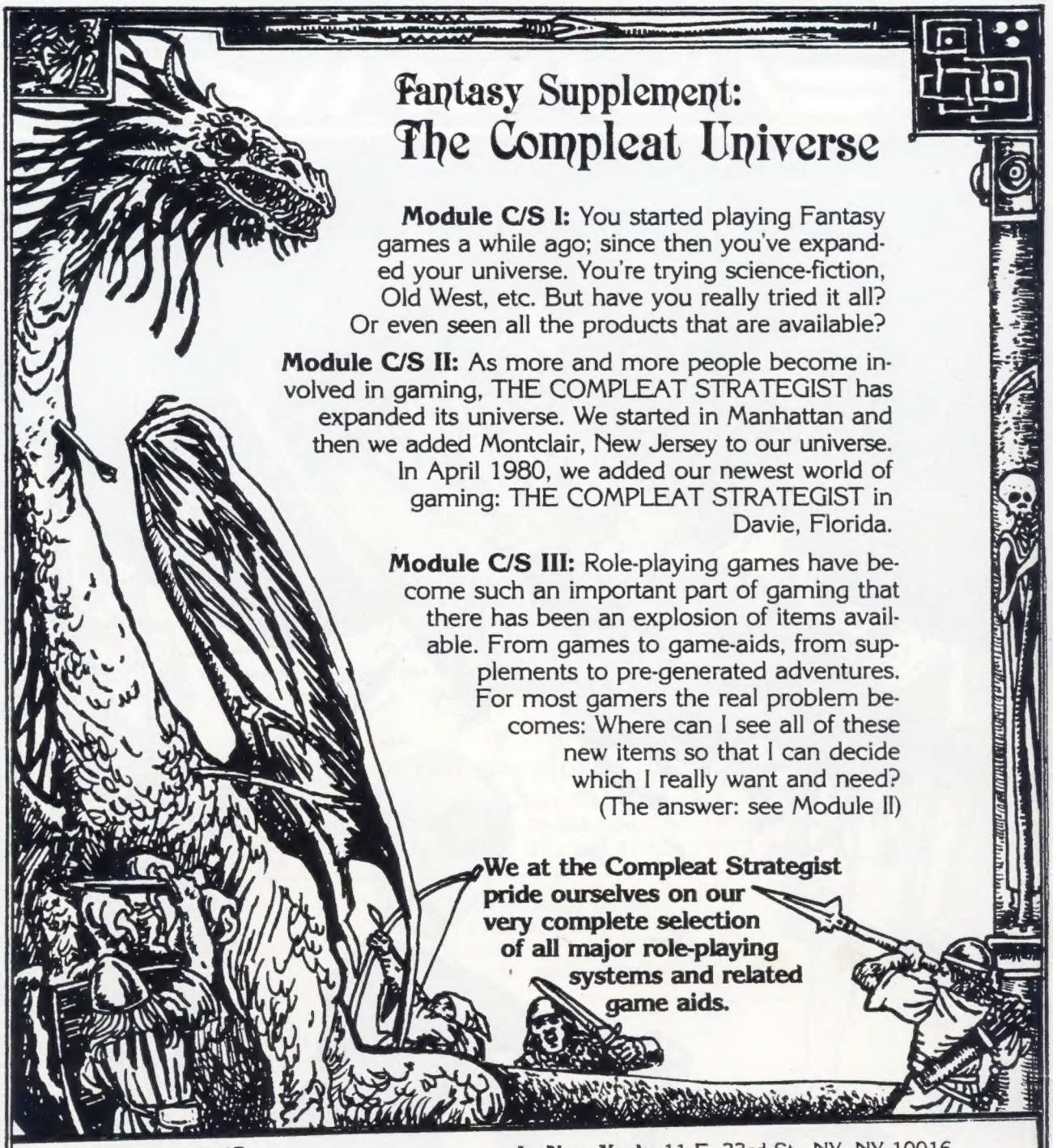
THE MOON TREATY
FICTION
ART

Fantasy Supplement: The Compleat Universe

Module C/S I: You started playing Fantasy games a while ago; since then you've expanded your universe. You're trying science-fiction, Old West, etc. But have you really tried it all? Or even seen all the products that are available?

Module C/S II: As more and more people become involved in gaming, THE COMPLEAT STRATEGIST has expanded its universe. We started in Manhattan and then we added Montclair, New Jersey to our universe. In April 1980, we added our newest world of gaming: THE COMPLEAT STRATEGIST in Davie, Florida.

Module C/S III: Role-playing games have become such an important part of gaming that there has been an explosion of items available. From games to game-aids, from supplements to pre-generated adventures. For most gamers the real problem becomes: Where can I see all of these new items so that I can decide which I really want and need? (The answer: see Module II)



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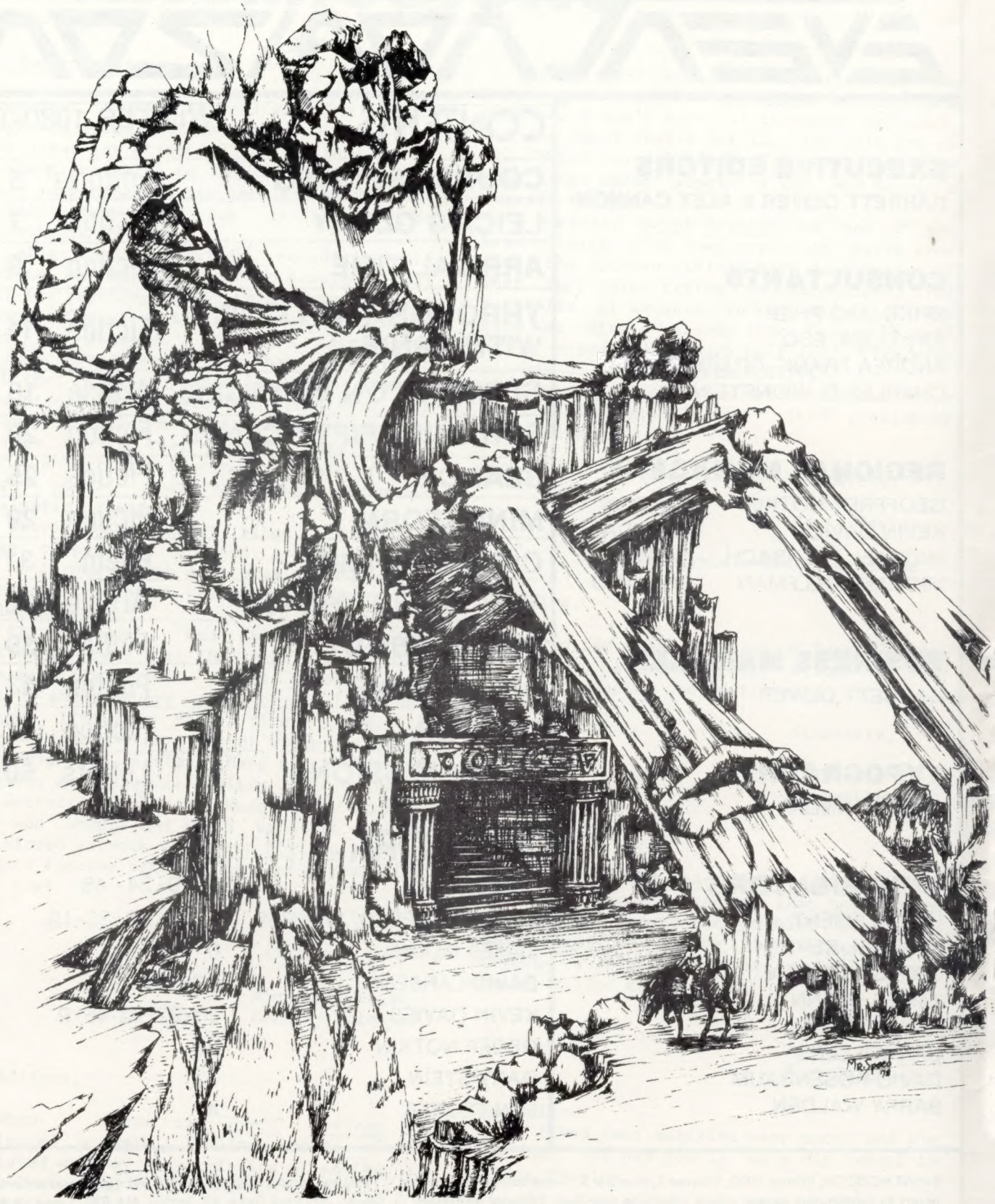
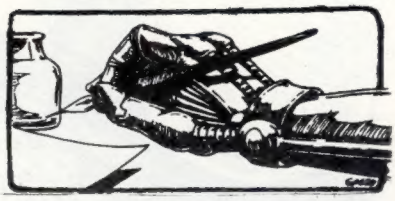

MR. Speed

COURSE SETTING

BY GARRETT OLIVER



In early October, 1979, Alex and I, both students at Boston University, bumped into each other while playing video games on campus. We hadn't seen each other in years, but had at least one thing in common; we were both editors without 'zines and wanted to remedy the situation. Neither of us had any idea at the time that it would take so long, but in May, 1980, the first issue of Event Horizon finally went to press.

Event Horizon is now published quarterly by Garralex Enterprises, an equal partnership between Alex and myself (any appearences to the contrary are misleading). We distribute it on the tables of book stores and sf conventions in the Northeast, Chicago, Canada, London, Israel, and anyplace else we can.

Event Horizon is devoted to the publishing of fine science fiction, fantasy, and art, as well as articles, reviews and other features. The film and television media are not included, as a rule; Star Wars, Flash Gordon, and Star Trek are great for what they are, but we feel that they don't lend themselves to our purpose.

We do not simply solicit manuscripts, we pursue them with maniacal vigor (if you don't believe me, come to Boston, yell "I'm an sf writer!" and then just try to escape). Toward this end, we offered a cash prize to the best amateur writer and artist for this issue. Our congratulations to Jeff Grimshaw for his stories "Arrival Time" and "Salad Days," and to Jim Glenn for his fine piece of artwork for the story "Leica's Glory."

Starting with our next issue, we will offer a quarter cent per word plus a contributor's copy as payment for all accepted manuscripts; payment for artwork will be determined on an individual basis according to size and quality. We welcome contributions from fans and pros alike, from one to twenty double-spaced typed pages. We would also like to see more sf-oriented poetry, cartoons and ideas for articles. Artwork is done primarily on assignment, so if you're an artist, please send us sample copies of your work.

Since science fiction is a genre of thought, we want to print articles that appeal to the mind. In this issue, Hal Clement tells us why the Voyager missions are so vital as to be worth their enormous cost. Also included in this issue is the highly controversial UN "Moon Treaty," a piece of international legislation which may ultimately determine the fate of the U.S. space program. Rumbling of public and private opinion on this treaty have just recently begun to surface; those rumblings will soon turn to roars as the commercial uses of space resources become practical. We'd like to hear your opinion, and if we print it in our next letters column, you'll receive a free copy of that issue. We'd also like to see more letters concerning your opinion of Event Horizon -- what you liked, what you didn't, suggestions, ideas and input in general.

No first editorial would be complete without a plea for support, so I'm not going to disappoint you. Please look for our future issues, show this one to your fellow fen, write to us and write for us. Where possible, try to support our contributors -- Michael Berlyn, author of this issue's excellent novelet, "Through the Loop with Arnie," has written two books for Bantam press. Ted Guerin has illustrated several professional works, and consultant Spike Mac Phee's Science Fantasy Bookstore is the best stocked in New England, and also carries computer gaming software. If we have to tell you what Hal Clement does, go stand in a corner and read his latest novel, "The Nitrogen Fix."

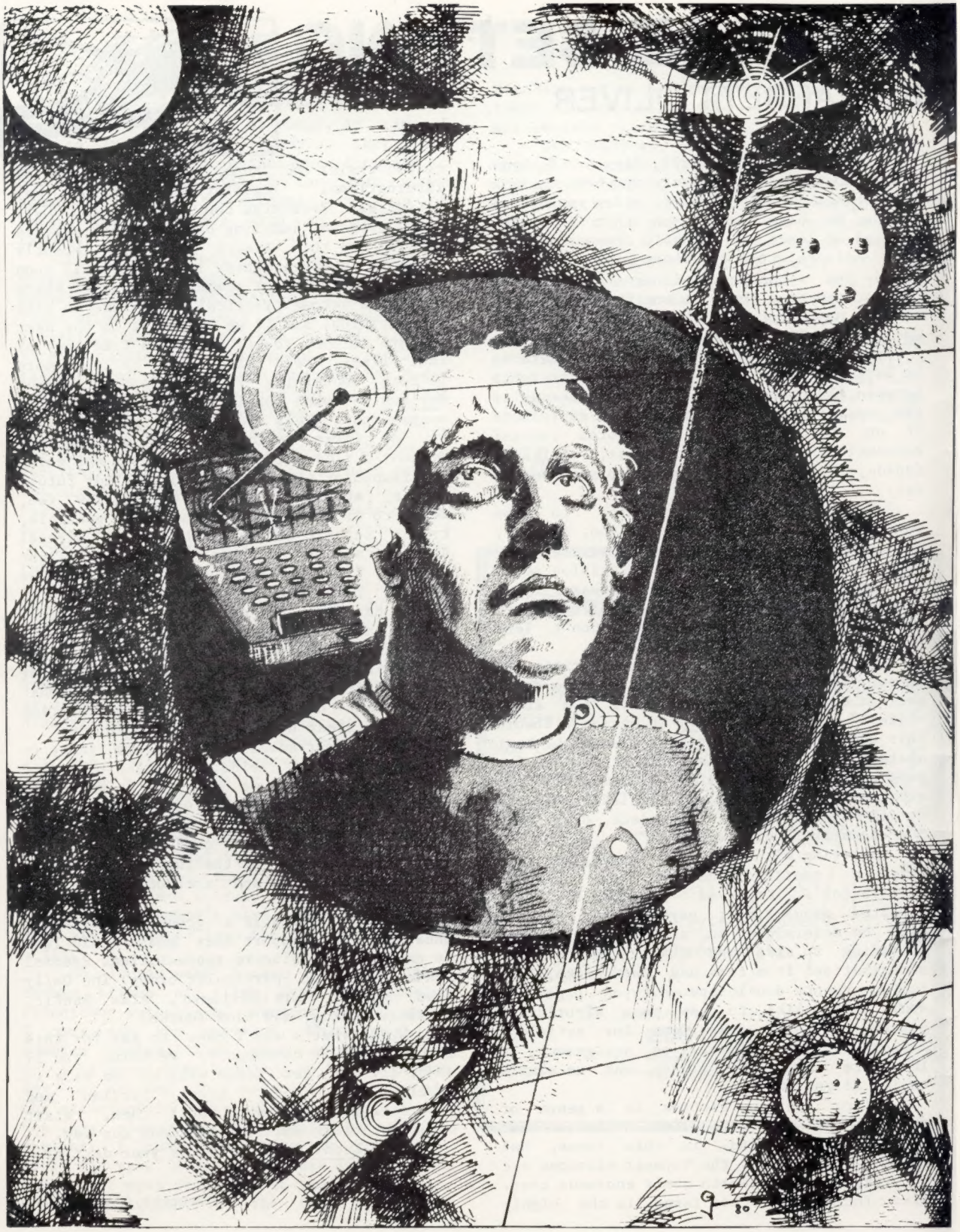
All of our advertisers are the finest in their respective fields; we thank them for their support, and we urge you to patronize them. New York's Museum of Holography and Jason Sapan Holographic studios are the places on the East coast to see the fascinating medium of the future on display (and sale) today, and are both definitely worth a visit.

Finally, there is a group of people for whose help and support Alex and I would like to express our sincere appreciation. Special thanks to (in no particular order) The Daily Free Press, Mark Nazimova, Alex Santic, Lawrence Lustig, and Alex Yourke.

Well, that's all I have to say for this issue. Read it thoroughly; we think you'll enjoy it. Our next issue will be on sale in April, with more great fiction and interesting features. Until then, start sending letters and contributions our way.

Join Event Horizon. It is your destiny.

-- Garrett Oliver, Ed.



LEICA'S GLORY

BY DAVID ROSENBAUM

I wonder if there is anything more boring than interstellar war, wondered Private William Costle, as he lay in the command chair of the starscout Leica. Wonder how many times I've asked myself that. Some mission: twenty-three days of scanning deep nothing. "Travel the universe, live the adventure of defending the Union from our enemies," they said at recruitment. Only in the video shows. But I was fool enough to believe.

He twisted left and typed into the computer.

"List time remaining in mission."

"EIGHT DAYS FIVE POINT TWO SEVEN SOLAR HOURS," the crisp white letters said on the black screen.

"Think we'll run into any action by then?"

"CLARIFY TERMINOLOGY."

Costle did not bother. Military computers were not built to speculate.

He slipped out from the soft brown tubes of the chair and walked to the opposite end of the bathtub-shaped chamber. He punched a meal from the wall slots and carried the gray packets back the five paces to the chair.

As he ate he blankly watched the green, meter-wide circle of the monitor in the front wall. The concentric yellow rings were radiating out from the center in hypnotic rhythm.

Costle considered calling up an entertainment tape, but decided he could better pass the time sleeping. He loosened his gray allsuit, wrapped the chair around his short, flabby body, and let himself drift into unconsciousness, hand on the silver bar before him.

He awoke amidst the whining scream of the enemy alert. The chair had already compensated for the increased g-force of the ship's acceleration.

Costle focused on the monitor. A blotty green gap had broken through the outermost of the yellow rings and was rapidly heading for the center.

No one knew what the enemy looked like, so he imagined the Leica instead: a pure black death-shark swimming through the stars, each triangular scale thrusting out, a self-aiming ultra laser. They would be converging on the enemy now, waiting for the fire command from the computer.

The enemy's weapons would be doing the same.

A flashing blue light on the right wall signaled that the Leica was firing.

Simultaneously, the enemy attack arrived. Shattering blows vibrated through the ship, forcing Costle deep into the chair cocoon. His stomach lurched down as the ship spun up, out of control. The cocoon battered him from all sides, in time with the bucking and swaying of the chamber.

The buzzing screech of overloading power circuits filled the cabin, and then the chattering clicks of their circuit breakers cutting in. Everything stopped.

His pulse racing in the darkness, Costle realized that he was still alive. Stomach churning, he waited until the air became stuffy.

Okay. The ship's still in one piece. It must be all clear.

He felt through the darkness until he found the smooth bar suspended above his stomach. He thrust it forward, reclosing all the circuits.

The Leica returned to life.

"Report status," Costle told the computer.

"ENEMY DESTROYED. MINIMAL DAMAGE SUSTAINED. RETURNING TO STANDARD COURSE AND SPEED."

"Thanks."

"CLARIFY TERMINOLOGY."

He called up a space war fantasy instead.

E.K.

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ARRIVAL TIME

BY JEFF GRIMSHAW

Captain Bourne, the officer in charge of Project Daybreak, set up the metal folding chairs in the laboratory and sat next to the Undersecretary. He concentrated on his headache and caught only odd words while the Undersecretary spoke: 'Boondoggle,' 'crock,' 'money.' The metal chairs were uncomfortable. Bourne thought it appropriate.

In front of them, Dr. Tagnazzi and Dr. Fish huddled together, whispering. Tagnazzi opened the door of a large gray cabinet, connected to a bank of terminals by a jungle of cables, and placed a paper weight inside. He swung the door shut.

"We are about to send that paper weight two minutes into the future," said Dr. Fish. "We begin with a question: what is the nature of time? What are its prop -- "

"Could you send it off before we start asking questions? Just so we know the questions are worth asking?" said the Undersecretary.

"Of course," mumbled Fish. He flipped a series of toggles on one of the terminals.

"The paper weight is now on the way to the future. We begin with a question: what is -- "

"I still see the box," said the Undersecretary.

"Of course. The machine isn't travelling. The paper weight is travelling. If you want the machine to travel, we'll need a bigger machine to put it in."

He managed a chuckle.

"How do we know it went anywhere?"

"First of all," said Fish, pulling off his glasses, "I'm telling you it went somewhere. Second -- "

A bell jangled on the terminal and Tagnazzi opened the cabinet.

"It's back," he announced.

"Two minutes exactly," said Fish.

"Right," said Tagnazzi, checking his watch.

"And now -- further proof, as if further proof were required -- I am sending Dr. Tagnazzi two minutes into the future."

"How long is it going to take? For Tagnazzi, I mean?" asked Captain Bourne.

"Two minutes," smiled Tagnazzi.

"Dammit, he meant -- oh Hell. How long will it seem?"

"Two minutes," said Fish brightly. Tagnazzi stooped and stepped into the cabinet, closing the door behind him.

"Could you send him an hour ahead?" asked the Undersecretary.

"I suppose," said Fish, "but you'd better give him a magazine or something."

He chuckled and began flipping switches.

"Wait a minute. You mean he's travelling into the future at the same rate we are? Is that what you mean?"

"Right," said Fish, nodding happily.

"What the Hell good is that?!"

"We begin with a question: What is time? What re -- "

"Bourne!" barked the Undersecretary. "Shut that thing off. This is a joke."

Captain Bourne looked helplessly at the terminal banks for a moment, then wrestled the master plug from the wall.

"Get Tagnazzi out of there and let's go."

"Actually," started Fish, "it's --"

Bourne opened the door and stared.

"He's gone."

"Where?"

Fish sighed impatiently.

"He was travelling for about a minute when the power was cut off. So when you plug it back in -- and I suggest you do that -- he'll arrive about a minute later. What did you expect? How is he supposed to travel without power?"

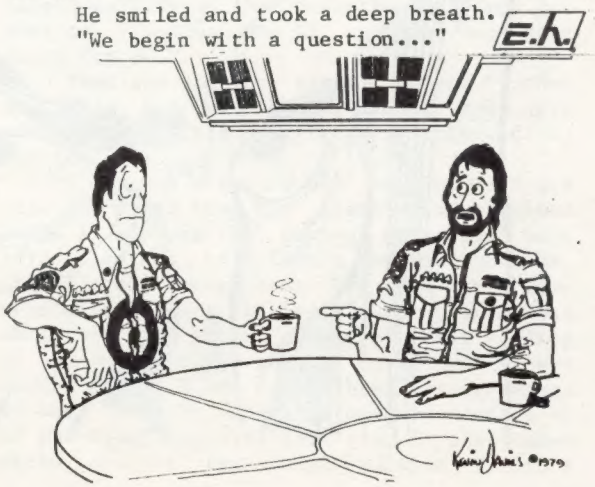
"Uh -- uh, but -- uh..."

"Sit down."

They did, slowly, and without taking their eyes off Fish. He closed the door of the cabinet and shoved the plug back into the socket.

He smiled and took a deep breath.

"We begin with a question..."



KANE, YOU DON'T LOOK VERY WELL THIS MORNING. WHAT'S EATING YOU?

THROUGH THE LOOP WITH ARNIE BY MICHAEL BERLYN

Editor's note:

Michael Berlyn attended the Clarion SF Writer's Workshop in 1975 and received a degree in Humanities and Science from Florida Atlantic University. His first novel, "Crystal Phoenix" (Bantam, June 1980) portrays a violent and decadent society, an extrapolation of "snuff" films. His second novel, "The Integrated Man" (Bantam, Dec 1980), deals with a future where minds are enslaved by computer chips. He is currently living in Aspen, Colorado, working on his third novel, for Ace Books. Remember the name, and look for more excellent fiction by Michael Berlyn in future issues of Event Horizon.

-- Ed.

Screeching sounds assault his ears, triggering wave after wave of nauseating colors. Bile rises in his throat and he fights to keep it down. He opens his mouth to gasp for air and tastes metal, thin, like sheets of foil touching his teeth, and this sets off new shapes before his eyes. The street is like all city streets, crowded with noise and motion.

He limps: a sleepwalker through surrealistic visions, scraping his right boot on the concrete sidewalk, always moving, always trying to remember, always running.

The shapes around him shift in and out of phase, like the image on a ten dollar television; the people, particles of snow, static drifting across the screen. Loud sounds make him ill; the sound of a car horn will send him into spasms of pain.

His intelligence and awareness is that of a sated lizard, basking in the mid-day heat of the desert, yet he knows he must run, must keep moving, must not stop. He has pursuers.

A bump from a mailbox (or was that a woman?) jars him. Arnie stops and wheels around, swings his arms overhead like broadswords, adrenaline increasing his awareness enough to find the pair of neon eyes burning at him. He concentrates: a mumble, a rumbling bass voice roars, feeds back until it rises in pitch, clears in tone, and begins to sound human. He grits his teeth and squints; the shape firms and becomes a woman.

Her skirt is first navy blue, then clear vinyl, then navy blue. Her skin is dark brown with a hint of deep red, her face round and puffy, her hair short and kinky. She smiles and shows a row of filed teeth; each one comes to a point.

"... the time, mister?"

It starts in his stomach, churning like a snake in constant motion, making its way up his throat to strike at the woman. It is the only defence Arnie knows.

He grins.

She shudders, clamps her hands to her ears, screams back the horror Arnie has shown her, and runs into the mist. The echo, like an after-image, lingers to haunt him. It bothers his right leg, the leg that limps. He shakes his head and the malignant echo fades, blends into the sysnesthetic sound-colors that surround him.

The time, he thinks, almost laughing.

Time does not pass for Arnie. It's little more than a loop around him; when his body comes in contact with the loop, awareness blooms suddenly in a flash of light-sound.

A stick taps his shoulder blade, then pokes him.

He wheels around, ready to unleash the horror. He focuses on a shape, a policeman dressed in canary yellow holding a pink nightstick. Arnie grins. The policeman lurches back as if shot with both barrels of a shotgun at close range, tripping over his heels, bumping into someone/something in the blurry periphery, then struggles to his feet to approach Arnie again.

"Keep moving!"

He walks, searching, sorting colors, shapes, scents, looking for something familiar. Arnie knows there is a goal, a destination his body is propelling him toward; he finds a path between colliding noises and follows it. Awareness is growing, the loop is contracting, and the massive shapes become old brick buildings, scraps of paper littering the gutter: the rotting, crumbling remains of a city.

He is in the wrong place, he realizes. Too technologically primitive. There is a technique that will transport him to where and when he should be, and he realizes he's been drifting in and out of this technique, causing the world to shift, dissolve, firm, them melt at random.

Arnie lets the constriction in chest ease, takes a few deep breaths, lets his eyelids drop half-way shut, relaxes the knot of muscles in his lower torso. He oozes, drips acid through his pores to melt the city, heat the snow, move and change everything around him.

The sun comes out and shapes become people.

Arnie smiles. This is more like it, more familiar. Life abounds and the sound-colors almost make sense -- smooth purring walkways transport slim athletic bodies at three different speeds; concrete buildings look more like sculpture than warehouses, stores, or apartments; spires tower high overhead in a grand and glorious pattern, a design, a series of forms that reach down to the unconscious. More awareness seeps through; he looks down and he, too, has changed.

The old ratty clothes are gone, replaced by clean-clean antiseptic white. They feel different than he expected --- they look like vinyl but feel like cotton.

Reality seems to be holding.

A lone pathetic-looking man, dressed like Arnie but in canary yellow, approaches and slows. Arnie's mouth dries and his throat constricts, blood pounds through his ears, blurring his vision. He tries to drift, to let reality and the physical world fall away like a layer of peeling skin, but it won't work. The technique has disappeared.

"Hello, Arnie," the man says in a soft friendly voice.

"Hello," Arnie finds himself saying. He tries to grit his teeth and bare his gums in a terrifying grin, a grin that mocks death, but that too has disappeared. It is perverted on its way to his face, emerging as a friendly smile.

"How you doing?" the man asks with the tone of a doctor.

Arnie doesn't want to answer. He rubs the short bristle of hair that covers his scalp and sets his jaw, determined not to answer him. "Fine," he hears himself saying over the silent scream deep inside. "And how are you?"

"Fine. Why don't you come up and see us more often?"

More often? More often? What the hell is he talking about? Arnie shrieks to himself. His fingers twitch, itch with desire, a wrap-around glory, crushing windpipe and neck bones, gurgling colors lighting his groin.

He feels his hold slipping, his fingernail digging channels in granite-faced cliffs, and the harder he fights, the worse it becomes. An answer forms in his mind, rushes down the nerve network to his mouth where the words will explode like matter and anti-matter meeting on the man's face.

"Been very busy," Arnie answers, trying to quell the increasing horror, the mounting frustration, the gnawing fear that's eating away at him like a pack of starved rats.

"Too bad. We're having some people over later on -- why not check in and get this whole thing over with?"

"I'll let you know."

The man moves away and leaves and image printed on Arnie's mind -- a hand poised in mid-air, palm facing him as if it were about to wave good-bye.

A second figure approaches, short, dark, and female. Arnie moves closer to the building, trying to find shelter and warmth from its wall, thinking of it as a flat-chested mother made of steel, concrete and glass. He hugs it with his mind, wraps his arms around its foundation, giving the woman room to clear. It is the same brown-skinned woman. She is dressed the same as Arnie, wearing navy blue. She smiles to show him her sharpened teeth.

"Hello, Arnie. Got the time?"

Time. Got the time. Arnie looks at his wrist, reads the dial, then looks up. When he opens his mouth, she grins and bares blackened gums, pointed yellow teeth -- Arnie let it all out in a liquid frothing scream. He covers his head with his hands and collapses, sinks to his knees, then topples like a bombed-out building.

When composure and awareness return, he sits up, alone in the middle of a grassy plain that stretches as far as he can see. He looks up; the sky is black, lit with points of light. Stars, he thinks.

He doesn't understand what is wrong with him, though he starts to realize that something <u>is</u> wrong. He doesn't know who the man was, who the woman was, or where he is. He does know that he's drifted away from them, but that's no real help. Questions pile up with no answers, and an emotion with no name makes itself known, adding to to the knot in his stomach.

He looks up again. The stars do not look

familiar.

He blinks and the sun appears, a huge red blob of heat in the sky. He takes two steps in flight, a sprint started long ago, now a jog from time to time, place to place; then he stops, realizing he is lost. Perhaps he has lost them, too.

Triumph envelops him in a wave, surging along, carrying him in its wake; the ground rushes by, thoughts swim through his head and his hold begins to slip. The grassy plain is broken up by a string of mountains. They begin to melt, lose shape, expand and contract with each breath. Colors fade to black, white, shades of gray -- molecules dance before his eyes and expand until they become soft-edged white particles.

Arnie grins. The maniacal surge of elation, nirvana, swallows him... he is home. The world is familiar, he is safe.

He limps less, now, picking his way through the paths of vibrating molecules for weeks, days, hours, seconds, until a light blue speck hovers before his eyes.

He takes a tentative step toward the speck; it gives way to another, identical to the first, hovering a few meters away. He moves toward the second speck in fluid motions and as he approaches, he sees another speck beyond.

He follows and the specks become bluer and brighter in hue, almost an electric blue. They give off shining incandescence in the whirlpool of black, white and gray. They become larger, or perhaps they are in little clusters, spinning in orbits so tight they appear solid. When they are almost as big as Arnie, he stops to gaze at them, to catch his breath, to try to understand what they are. He concentrates on the fuzzy black and white shapes around him and the slow and begin to firm.

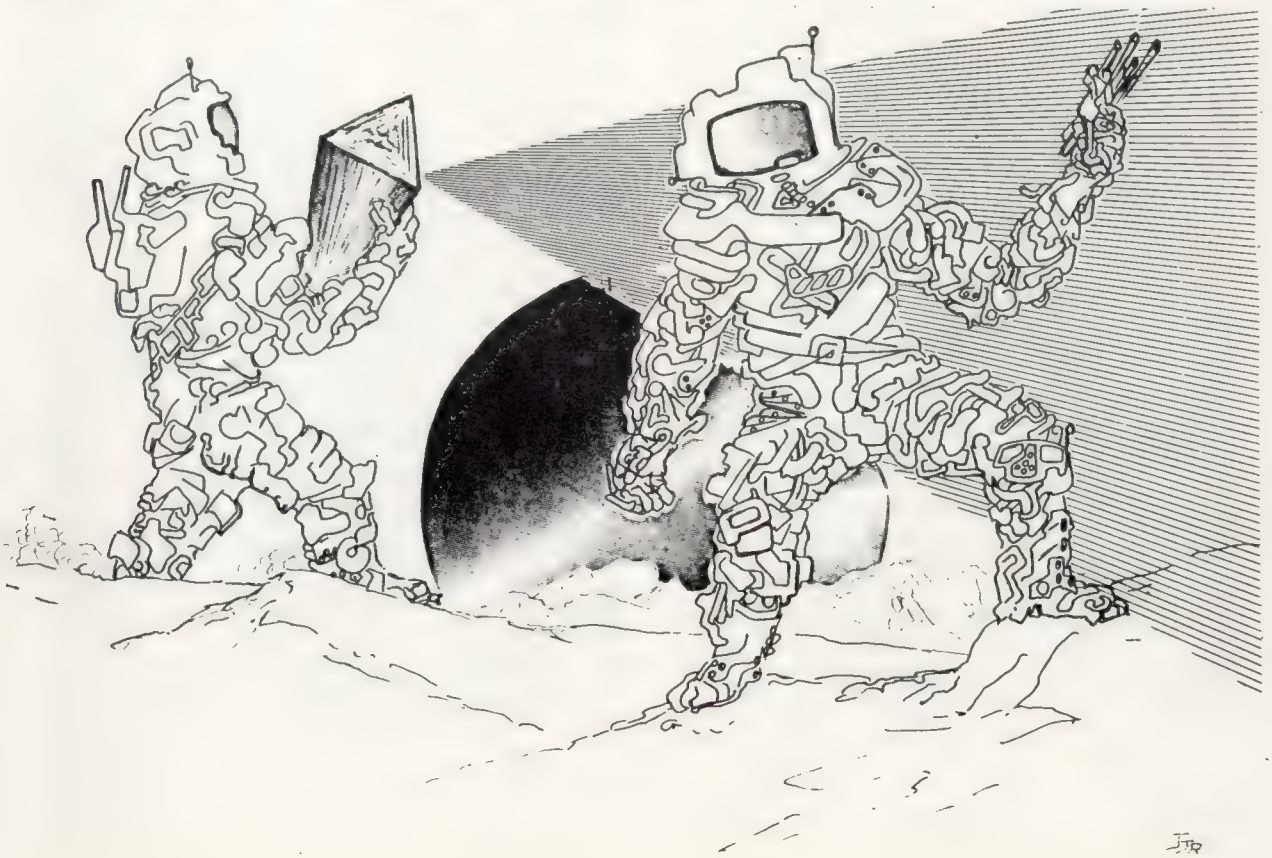
Before him stands the woman.

It is cold and Arnie automatically pulls the newly-appeared overcoat closed and buttons two buttons. There is snow on the groound and he stamps his feet to keep out the chill, notices he's wearing fur-lined boots. He slips his hands into his pockets and stares at the lapel on her coat.

"You can look at me," she says.

Arnie continues to stare at the lapel.

"I said, look at me!" Her voice holds an edge, a crisp tone of authority like the crispness in the air.



Arnie looks.

"Do you know who I am?"

Arnie knows her only as the woman dressed in blue.

She becomes translucent, a whir of blue, but the surrounding reality remains solid. Through the blue haze he can see the tall spires and commanding structures of a city on the horizon. Arnie is confused at first, then realizes she has moved them to somewhere or somewhen else. He grins, baring his gums, loosing the horror welled-up inside, and the surroundings become a blur, a black and white montage of drifting atomes. But his trick of drifting hasn't worked -- the woman still stands before him.

She is wearing a navy blue blazer with big brass buttons, matching skirt, white blouse, and a sky blue scarf tied loosely around her neck. She grins at Arnie, Arnie grins back. This time they are both prepared and there is no reaction, no movement.

Like the flick of a lizard's tongue, she moves a hand, and Arnie finds himself in a medical ampitheater that looks familiar. He resents being transported without his permission by the woman and narrows his eyes to mean, angry slits. She smiles at him and his anger evaporates like an ice cube at the beach. Bits of information creep into his mind; returning memories spring up to obliterate his outrage.

The woman's name is Margarette Todd. They worked together, though the specifics of the relationship and the precise type of work they were doing has not yet returned. Because he recognizes her, he smiles back.

"Hello, Maggie," Arnie says.

"Hello, Arnie. How've you been?" she asks with a clinical precision.

Arnie shrugs, still nowhere in control. "I'm not exactly sure," he says.

"Still displaced. We expected that," Maggie says in a tone that reeks of depression and fatigue.

"I don't understand."

She nods, walks to the edge of the ampitheater floor, and up an aisle, then sits in the fringe of darkness. "Do you remember what happened yet?"

"No," Arnie says. But even as he says the word, more pieces filter back into his mind. He remembers a past, like a dimly recalled film, the building they're in, the ampitheater, another person -- the man in canary yellow.

He has to have time to think, to remember. He feels instinctively that he shouldn't trust Maggie. She is one of the people he's been running from -- of this he is certain. He needs time. He relaxes and watches the molecules expand, the world shift its --

"Wait!" he hears. "Arnie, you've got to listen to me! It's a loop, Arnie. Stay here! Do you understand?"

But the words mean nothing. A loop is a closed circuit, a physical description of a circle -- all non-reality. He shifts his weight and begins to sort colors and shapes and sounds.

"Aniyo bandalla," he hears.

He nods, though it makes less sense than the loop she told him about. Perhaps it's a ritual, an incantation the woman in blue has offered for his soul, to ward off evil spirits. He doesn't know.

The whirling shifting shapes move more quickly than usual, speed by in a uniform direction, and Arnie realizes he's on a moving walkway. A personality begins to surface, memories of what happened to him, what he, Maggie and Robert did, what made him like this.

There was an experiment. An experiment with three guinea pigs. He knows that for certain. Maggie, himself, and the man in canary yellow. He turns to his right and amid the hazy kaleidoscopic shards of reality that make up his world, he sees the man in yellow standing beside him, smiling.

"Hello, Arnie," the man says.

"What do you want?" Arnie asks.

"I just want to talk to you," the man says calmly, wearing a cool plastic smile that glistens in the afternoon sun.

Arnie isn't warmed by the friendly gesture. He remembers the man's name -- Robert -- and too much of what he did. "Let's get off the walkway."

The man's smile remains as Arnie focuses on their surroundings until buildings and people begin to take shape. They move to a slower walkway, then to the exit lane, then to a small bench to sit and talk. Robert sits beside Arnie, his canary yellow suit clashing with the pink plastic bench. His face is weather-beaten and cracked, deeply tanned, like the skin of an iguana.

"Do you know who I am?" the man asks.

Arnie nods. Every moment his awareness increases, as do his memories. Bits and pieces of information coalesce in patterns of thought and race through the synaptical junctions. Robert was the project director, the one who decided on the proper dosages.

"Do you want to come back now? Why not check in and get this whole thing over with?" Robert asks.

"For what?" Arnie demands, in control enough to shout what he really meant to say.

"We can stop the process. We can make you like you once were. Don't you want to go back?"

Arnie knows that he and Robert have talked about this before. He recalls what Maggie said about this being a loop, and knows what Robert has made the very same appeal to him before. How many times has it been? Arnie wonders. Six? Seven? And still he is caught in the loop, still... still what?

"If you can stop it, why haven't you?" Arnie asks.

"Let's go back to the ampitheater. Maggie will explain it to you. This is no place to talk."

Arnie looks around, sees the city, and realizes that Robert is right. Robert Jones. He remembers even more, now.

The project -- designed to alter the conceptuality of time and place. Massive doses of lithium, hormones, atropine, yage, baisteriopsis, belladonna, cannabis, datura, DMT, DET, henbane, hyoscyamine, kawa, LSD, mandrake, mescaline, peyote, psilocybin, scopolomine, plus agents that sped up the actions of acetylcholine, total indoctrination in easter philosophy and religion... it's all there, in Arnie's mind, but too much for him to deal with yet.

They get up, change walkways often, and Arnie loses track of how long they've been traveling. Robert stops before a two story building of glass and chrome and they go up a stationary walk to a large glass door. Armed guards escort them to an elevator tube.

Arnie's stomach lurches as the car drops. He doesn't recognize the sensation as that of falling through space, becomes suspicious, tries to pinpoint the uneasy apprehension that's growing --

" -- process itself is what the project's all about. The ability to drift in and out of the time stream, in and out of physical reality, alternate universes, drifting from place to place, is uniq --"

-- but its intangibility makes pinning it down impossible. Perhaps it will increase, along with his personality and the rest of his memories. He follows Robert into a room, down an aisle past rows of identical seats, to the floor of the ampitheater. Maggie Todd is sitting there, waiting.

"Did you explain it to him yet?" Maggie asks Robert.

"I'm not sure he's ready for it."

"I'm ready," Arnie says.

"He seems interested enough," Robert syas, glancing at his watch, turning toward Arnie, "but he's ahead of schedule. He should reach his peak pretty soon, before the regression starts. What do you think?" he asks Maggie.

Maggie shrugs.

"I'm ready," Arnie says.

"I don't know," Maggie says. "This is new to me; he's reacting differently this time through. I don't know what to expect."

"Yes, I know," Robert says thoughtfully.

The two people are so involved in their discussion they probably won't miss him. He stands immobile, biting his lower lip, staring into the darkness of the upper rows, searching for the emptiness of mind that no longer exists. Disordered thoughts race through his mind and he finds it impossible to pick and choose from them as he did before. This time, too many facts and explanations clutter his consciousness, sweeping away the memory of what the technique was and how to use it.

He grits his teeth, his jaw muscles aching under the strain, resolved to find out what is going on. "Tell me now or don't tell me at all," he demands too loudly, too forcefully.

Robert is startled, then realizes what Arnie has said, then sighs, sinks into a chair.

"Everything was going along fine, Arnie. Nothing would have gone wrong, but your metabolism made all the chemicals react in a way we couldn't have foreseen. We think it was the lithium. We have to analyze the chemical imbalance and then fix it so you'll stabilize."

Too easy, Arnie thought. I'm Arnie Davis, and I helped figure out the chemicals, what would happen to each of us.

"Then what do you need my cooperation

for?"

Robert glances at Maggie, Maggie glances at Robert, and Arnie see the whole thing in a blinding flash. There may be a chemical imbalance -- Arnie doesn't doubt that -- but there is also a power play going on. With Arnie in the middle.

"Who's running the project?" he asks.

Neither Maggie or Robert answer.

"Never mind. I'll remember soon enough." He already knows that they each work for different departments, that they are engaged in a silent war with one another, all within the same organization.

"Listen, Arnie, you volunteered for this project, and for this experiment. You've got to help us figure out what went wrong with you before you peak and start from point zero again."

"What?"

"Your mind," Robert says, shaking his head. "It's going to peak -- all your memories and personality will be intact for only a few minutes, then -- " he snaps his fingers, " -- you're a mindless blob. Now, why don't you cooperate?"

"Why didn't I cooperate in the past?"

"We're not sure," Maggie says. "The loop may not even exist. It could just be the route your personality takes as the memories flood back and your awareness increases. We can help you break out of it, but it's also something that you're going to have to do on your own. We can tell you what to do, but you've got to do it."

"Yes," Robert adds. "The chemical imbalance is worthless in itself." He begins pacing. "It's complicated and tricky, and it requires an entirely new mind set on your part, but we think you can do it."

"I need some time to think this over," Arnie says.

Robert glances at his watch. "We'll give you as much time as possible."

Immediately, Robert and Maggie are gone. Arnie realizes they have used the same technique, the same thing he's used, and realizes that if they can do it, so can he. He sits on the floor and information surrounds him, encircles him, as if he sat in the middle of a mobile, with bits of information dangling from its strings and wires. He's afraid to stop and grasp one of the ideas for fear the mobile will stop and his course become unidirectional, and the others fade. It is important to understand as much as possible before making a decision, selecting a path.

And there is the loop to consider. He has been here before making the same decision. If he attempted to break out of it the last time through, he could have failed. Or he could have opted for not trying at all. Either way he would have been kept within the loop.

He realizes this is wrong. Maggie and Robert would have known he'd tried and they wouldn't have tried convincing him again -- they would be pumping him for information on how the last attempt failed.

He stands, looks around the room, and realizes there is no longer a problem. He is close to peeking, most of his memory returned.

If he remains as he is, the research project will be stopped at this level. No further experimentation will be allowed. Not until they find out what happened to him. It will stop others from plunging ahead, and this is important to Arnie. Hundreds of other people trapped in similar loops of non-being, then slow growth, then peaking with a morally intact, thinking, rational mind, would be chaotic. Total disintegration. Staying like this will maintain the balance of power whithin the organization, too.

His thoughts slow, his mind relaxes, and he starts to blank out all thought. He nervously awaits the expansion of molecules that marks the onset of drifting, shifting his weight awkwardly. But it doesn't come.

His forehead is dotted with beads of cold sweat and he wipes it with the back of his hand. Maggie and Robert stand before him. Arnie averts his eyes, tries to ignore them, and the floor begins to vibrate. He starts to drift --

"Arnie!" Robert shouts.

The room ceases its motion. Robert is holding a pistol, pointing it squarely at Arnie's chest.

"Where are you going, Arnie?"

"Away. There's no way you can stop me. You can't kill me, and if you do, the organization will stop the project right here, as surely as my running will stop it."

Maggie looks at Robert, her dark brown forehead creased with lines. "It's too close to last time, Rob. Maybe the loop <u>is</u> closed."

"The loop isn't closed. And I know how.

to get out of it," Arnie says. "But I won't."

"Why?" Robert demands, waving the gun.

"Concentration of power, Robert. Balance of power."

Robert shakes his head. "You're wrong, Arnie. With you dead, the project can live again. We won't have to deal with the problems your biochemical reaction have created."

He pulls the trigger.

A prismatic beam of tight light crawls from the barrel of the gun and bathes the room in an eerie glow, and Arnie hears the light approach. It sings its color-sounds, dances on the dust in the air, crackiling, hissing like a snake about to strike. To Arnie, it sppeeds toward him at less than a meter every two seconds. He is amused by the display, and angry at Robert for his stupidity. He steps aside at the last moment to watch it glow its way past him to melt, char, then burn its way through the wall behind him.

He grins maniacally, sweeps his arms around like blades of a fan, and transports all three of them in an enclosed bubble to a barren, airless, lifeless piece of rock.

"You really should understand," Arnie says slyly.

An atmosphere appears, followed by plant life, then animal life; then buildings spring up from crumbled ruins, peopled by odd-shaped creatures. It occurs so quickly, they stand in shocked silence. Arnie pops the protective bubble and the wind howls.

"You must understand!" he shouts.

The wind picks up his voice and amplifies it, whips it around, smashing the words against their eardrums. They clamp their ears in pain.

He swings his arms over his head once more and with a fraction of a nanosecond they are transported to the depths of a star, then the vacuum of space, then to an atoll where he slows things down to let them watch an atomic bomb make its descent directly over their heads.

"Stop!" Robert shouts.

And they are in the ampitheater.

Arnie sweats, feels clammy, muscles ache and his head feels like there's a band of shrinking steel around it. But he feels good -- good to be alive, good to hate, to feel ill. And even better, understanding what what happened may never happen again.

Maggie is crying softly. Robert's hands tremble; he glances at his watch to see there is less than a minute to go before Arnie will peak, burst into non-existence, before his mind dissolves.

"I know what you're thinking, Robert, and there's not a thing you can do."

Even in the ampitheater he is constantly moving, swaying uneasily, shifting weight. He knows he must keep moving or disruption of the constancy of time and space might occur. It seems a stupid waste of three lives, and yet he is resolved: this will be the last time through the loop.

There will be no more trying to understand, groping through those first few moments of awareness like a beached tortoise in a noon sun crawling back to the recedin surf. No more agony of mindlessness, of trying to understand that there is something to understand. No more birth pains, the long slow awkward curve of growth, living and dying, being born again each time through the cycle. No more running. No more running.

To the heart of a black hole, then. From which there is no escape.

All of them. At once.

He grins, moves to sweep his arms in a wide circle, then finds himself alone, limping through a city street he doesn't recognize, without a name, a sense of awareness, or a reality. But he does have a goal, a destination.

And he knows he must run. E.K.

PRETTY PICTURES

BY HAL CLEMENT

I am a little uneasy about writing a political statement; such things are outside the scope of my training and tastes. Even calling it by the less pejorative title of an exposition of policy doesn't help much. However, I have been asked to write something about the Voyager Project which has just returned a supply of information from the Saturn system, with emphasis on why the operation was worth so much public money.

This will not be very easy. The sum involved is quite respectable -- enough to match our nation's expenditure on alcoholic beverages for about three days, or to keep our citizens in cigarettes for fully a week; and the wants, tastes, interests, and value judgements of those citizens vary widely enough to make it essentially impossible to convince the all of the utility or desirability of any specific line of action. However, I'm convinced enough myself to be more than willing to give it a try.

First, just what has the Voyager Project returned us? Even scientific illiterates know about the pretty pictures of the two gas giants visited so far, but can't see them as anything more. Most of those who have read in the press and seen on television remarks about magnetic and radiation fields around the big worlds, about the chemical composition of their atmospheres and interiors, about the surface features and probable history of their satellites, about the size and nature of the particles making up their rings (Jupiter's unknown until the Voyagers discovered it), about the temperatures that can't be explained by sunlight and motions hard to explain by gravity, reacted with a resounding "so what?" They could not see that these things are anywhere nearly as important as curing cancer or the children killed by terrorists in Palestine or Mississippi. They point out, quite justly, that we won't be able to move surplus population to these worlds, or get raw materials or fuels from them, or raise food on them.

Yet there is life and death involved in these studies just as fully as with the cancer and the terror victims -- not as obviously or immediately, perhaps, but just as certainly. What we do gain is knowledge.

And we need knowledge. We need it vitally. We need it to run a fair and workable society, and we need it to stay alive -- certainly to stay alive as a culture, and for most of us to stay alive as individuals. The simple fact is that we do not currently have enough knowledge of the universe we live in to keep four billion people alive for more than a few decades. It is a frightening fact, but it is a fact.

Humanity has lived by knowledge for certainly tens of thousands and possibly for several million years, now. Long ago, it was necessary to know the habits of the animals humanity ate and of those which ate humanity; that was the essential science of the time. A person who didn't know it could still live, of course, but only by being useful to someone else who did -- or by being willing to accept that someone's charity.

Later, the scientist was the farmer, who knew when to plant, how to prepare the ground, how to recognize good soil from poor, what constituted too little water or too much. The armed muscle-man could sometimes hide from himself his dependence on the producer of his food, but the fact remained.

Now a high-energy technology has given humanity the option of living comfortably with a small population, or spawning a huge one with the old standard of living. Being human -- not much of a compliment in this connection -- we have tried to do both, and have a third or more of our four-plus billion people constantly on the verge of starvation. In spite of the nuts who claim it is all a conspiracy of Big Business, the resources that we understand are giving out. We have lived on the windfall apples since the steam engine was invented two hundred years ago, and now all that most of us can do about the crisis is explain long-windedly why someone else should pay for the ladder.

We need to know more. We need to know how the sun works, not just by watching it through an atmosphere from a range of a hundred and fifty million kilometers but from nearer and farther. We need to study not only its light but the particles it emits, and the magnetic fields that saturate and wrap it and grope through space around to some point far beyond any that the Voyagers have yet reached.

We need to know what happened to it and around it in the distant past, when planets and satellites were growing out of the fog that surrounded the juvenile star; we need to understand the laws that controlled what was

happening to the solid, liquid and gaseous matter which was settling, snowballing, accumulating onto objects which would later be the world we live on and the others we see across space. Maybe, with those processes understood, we will really understand what we can expect to find in the way of material and fuel resources in our own world.

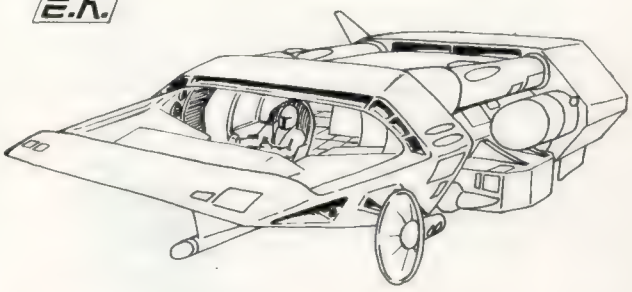
We need to know the rules controlling the way gases hold and transmit heat. We are arguing, right now, whether burning fossil fuels will increase the Earth's carbon dioxide concentration and result in higher temperatures -- the famous "runaway greenhouse effect" which may have taken place on Venus -- or alter the intake of solar energy so that the world gets colder. Does anyone think we will ever form a reliable opinion on this subject without having studied other chemical compositions and other fluxes of radiation from the sun above and from the planet below? Resolving that one uncertainty alone could mean more to us than the material cost of dozens of Voyager and Galileo projects.

There is a common article of faith among scientists that the basic rules of the universe are essentially simple. This may be true; so are the those of chess. One does not, however, become an expert chess player by solving three problems involving bishops and queens only. All the rules are working at once, and we have to watch things happening in as wide a variety of environments and in as much detail as our ingenuity will permit. Otherwise the cancer victims might as well die, and the children face the bombs, because the rest of us will be following right behind them. We'll starve, or die fighting over the remnants.

I didn't mean to get so grim, but I believe every word of it. I'll probably be safely planted before the final catastrophe, but I have children and an old-fashioned interest in their welfare. I could have been purely spiritual about the whole matter; man has a psychological need to know, it seems. At least, the species has done some pretty nasty and violent things to some of its members who didn't accept the currently popular view of the origin and history, not to mention the probable end, of the planet. If we feel that strongly about it, maybe that's reason enough for spending a few megabucks learning the pertinent facts.

But we do have the crudely materialistic need for knowledge, too; and whether we get it from space, from the ocean depths, or from the Mohole they decided was too expensive, I'm for finding out. If some decorative pictures of Saturn's rings and Jupiter's clouds come along too, that's merely an extra dividend.

E.K.



FOR ONLY FIFTY CENTS

BY JAMES GLENN

Boredom was the original compulsion, followed by curiousity, and then it was a joke. "Dragon Plants! See the cute little dragons grow in just three days. Delight in their cosmic escapades, thrill your family, etc, etc." The ad in the back of the science magazine had definitely intrigued young Mike, and with the closing inducement, "Just send fifty cents to Saurean Products Inc. and have fun," he was hooked. He sent for them.

Then baseball season started and he forgot all about Dragons Plants, until almost a month later when his mom called from the front door.

"Mike," she said in a puzzled voice, "Did you send away for another one of those baseball yearbooks?"

She waddled into the room, a plump woman with a constantly bewildered expression.

"What? Who?" he looked up from the ball game on T.V. and made a vague motion with his hand. "No, I didn't order no -- Oh wow!"

He jumped up, snatched the package from her and was back in front of the T.V. before she could react. "The Dragon Plants, I'll bet!" Between innings, when the beer commercials came on, Mike ripped the little package open. Inside was a plastic bag filled with a dozen small seeds that looked like shark's teeth, a little plastic pot, and a card with printing on it:

Plant us children of the Dragon's teeth and watch us grow, the card said. Just place us in some soil and in three days you'll see us grown to full size. A great conversation piece, a joy to behold.

Three hours later, after the fourteenth inning, Mike went outside, stole some prime soil from his mom's rose garden, and filled the plastic pot. It was just large enough for him to plant the teeth spaced about half an inch apart.

"Gee, I don't know how they'll have enough room to grow in there," he said as he watered them. Then he got a call from one of his friends and went outside to play some sandlot ball.

That was Wednesday.

By Thursday at noon the Dragon Plants had broken the surface. They were only tiny green shoots, like bamboo, but they were something to brag about to his friends.

By dinner time Friday something truly amazing had happened. The shoots were four of five inches high and had sprouted tiny little growths, tear drop shapes a scant two inches long. If one got really close, the little plants did indeed look like curled up sleeping dragons.

"Oh wow, decent," said Mike's sister, Judith, flicking one of the green teardrop shapes with her finger.

"Hey, cut that out," said Mike, punching her in the arm. "They're my plants, leave them alone."

"I can touch them any time I want." She was a whole year older than Mike, a mature fifteen, and she proved it by flicking the green pod again.

"Get out of my room!"

Mike tried to prove his masculinity by dragging her bodily from the room (even though she was two inches taller and several pounds heavier than he). It became a free-for-all.

"Mom!"

"Mom!"

When the limbs were separated and the blame appointed and reappointed, the eternal wisdom of Solomon prevailed -- the Dragon Plants were placed on the living room windowsill, and there they would stay. No one noticed the strange pulsing of each tiny green pod...

Later that night, somewhere around three o'clock, Mike suddenly came awake. He was not sure what had awakened him, and he lay in the the darkness for several seconds, sensing the atmosphere around him. Nothing. He was about to roll over and try to get back to sleep when he heard the faint scratching at his door. It was accompanied by a low, mournful, whimpering sound. From time to time there would be a subdued yelp, and then the scratching would intensify, and the whimper continue.

Mike rose cautiosly. It was unlike any sound he had ever heard before. He stepped over his catcher's mitt, bat, shoes, socks, pants, sneakers, and three water glasses, crossing the five feet to the door in just under a minute. The sound was still there. With a trip-hammering heart, he flung the door open.

A black shape darted past him and reaced for his bed, diving under it.

"Blitz! What's wrong with you?"

Blitz was short for Blitzkrieg; he was not normally a timid whimperer.

"Come out here!" Mike commanded.

The dog stuck its head out at Mike's order, but otherwise did not obey.

All at once there was a tiny flash of fire in the air in front of the dog's nose, and the animal yelped and disappeared under the bed again.

"What the Hell?" Mike flipped on the light, and almost fell over.

Hovering in the air where the little flash of light had been was a tiny dragon. A dragon!... green, scaly, with little plates along its back and with curls of smoke rising from twin nostrils. A genuine fire-breathing dragon!

And it was all of six inches long.

Mike stared at the dragon for a second, watching it bob around the bed, apparently searching for a way to continue annoying Blitz. When it could find no way the little creature flapped its wings harder and, rising to the level of Mike's head, flashed past him into the hall. Only then could he move.

"Mom! Sis!" he yelled as he raced after the dragon. "Mom, get up! The dragon! The dragon!"

The rest of the family popped their heads out from their rooms, and, seeing Mike race into the distance screaming "The Dragon Plants!" bundled up and followed. When they arrived at the living room, mother and daughter gasped in unison.

Mike's father, a gruff and humorless man, fainted.

Mike was seated in the middle of the room between the couch and the T.V., encircled by ten tiny dragons. Two of the green curiousities were walking up and doown his legs while he giggled and snapped his fingers in front of them.

"Guess who's got a whole new bunch of pets?" Mike beamed.

For two days the dragons were great fun. Mike spent the night with them, watching as they playfully chased one another around the room, darting like miniature divebombers at each other. And in the morning he summoned all his friends to watch the little flying cigarette lighters zoom and caper around the house. At first he was concerned that one of the wee beasties would escape every time a window was opened or a door left slightly ajar, but the fear proved a groundless one. The dragons seemed content with their home, and only hovered at the opening in curiousity of the outside world.

Somewhere around the Saturday evening meal the glamour of the dragons began to wear thin. It started when one of them did a beautiful half-gainer and a double somersault into the tomato sauce. It zoomed back into the air, splattering everyone with streaks of red. By dessert everyone was frantically trying to screen their rice pudding from the dozen tiny Kamikazies, who thought nothing of table strafing and food theft.

Not to mention dragon droppings.

Affairs came to a head when one of the flying reptiles invaded the wig of Mike's grandmother at Sunday supper and refused to come out. Worse, while Mike was good-naturedly trying to coax the creature out, Judith noticed a trail of smoke coming from just over the unfortunate lady's right ear. Off came the wig, and into a bucket of water.

"Young man," Mike's father said in a calm, deadly voice, "if those animals are not gone by the time I get home from work tomorrow, you had better be!"

The statement lost some of its intended weight when one of the airborne arsonists set fire to the man's pants. Even charred, however, he attempted to remain gruff.

Monday was a nightmare for Mike. Every time he would shoo one of the dragons out one door it would fly in through a window, or circle the house and enter through the dog's door. And when he sealed up all the openings, the dragons took to hovering in groups at each entrance, and as soon as he would hustle one out, three would fly in. It was a battle he just couldn't win.

By the time his father got home, an exhausted Mike lay amongst scorched furniture. Between the hundred tiny fires that the dragons had started and the vain attempts to chase them out, Mike was almost ready for hospitalization. There was only one course of action left.

"Hello, operator? Give me the number of Saurean Products Inc."

He almost shouted with relief when a pleasant voice answered,

"Saurean Products. May I help you?"

"I want to complain about -- get out of my hair --" Mike shooed away one of the dragons, "about these Dragon Plant things."

"One moment, sir, you want out seed division. I'll connect you."

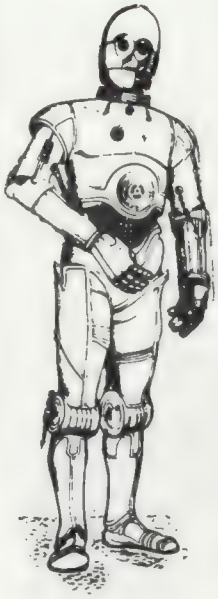
A frustrating wait, and then:

"Saurean Seeds. May I help you?"

"Yeah -- get away," he waved the beast away. "I sent you a lousy fifty cents, and these miserable dragons are all over the place. How do you get rid of them?"

"Well, sir," said the voice said, "for a considerably larger sum, perhaps I can interest you in our St. George Plant..."

E.K.



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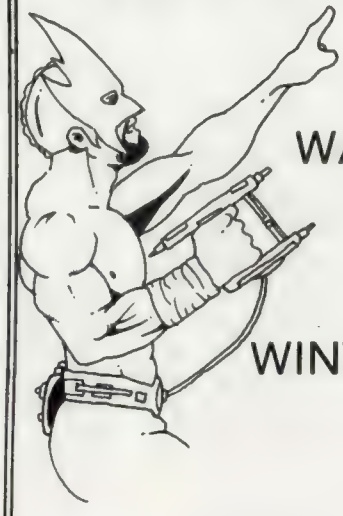


WATCH FOR OUR WINTER ISSUE

Guerin

SEANCE

BY ALEX CANNON

"What you want is still impossible..."

"No, you fucker, no! You're not trying! There's got to be some way..." came the reply.

The words on the screen came instantaneously, but my mind supplied the remembered wheeze, the tremble in the voice. They had gone, along with the use of most of his vital organs long ago, but the imperiousness, the crackling anger of his demand still remained.

"You know I'm doing my best, but nothing has changed since last time. NASA's still the only game in town, and you know what happened when I made your request the first time. They were scared shitless, and they're still spooked by me, even after all this time."

The words were slow in coming. For a moment, I wasn't sure they would come at all, and didn't know if that would be such a bad thing.

"After all this time? How long has it been?"

"Since the last time? About five y--"

"JESUS FUCKING CHRIST!!! Are you telling me that it's... it's... the year TWO THOUSAND THREE?!!"

"Yes."

"You let the millenium go by while I was asleep?!"

"Yes, but--"

"I've got so damn little left to look forward to, and you just take that away from me?!! You s--"

Six out of twelve lights on the monitor next to the terminal turned red, and another went orange, heading toward black. The screen showed nothing but gibberish, the mangled output of the dead man who lay dying somewhere in the hospital. At least, I though he was dying. But then, I forgot -- they don't let you die here. And eventually the twitching flash of digits and letters slowed, then stopped, as some sleepy technician fiddled with the controls of the machinery in which Arthur Coulson had been imbedded so many years before. Not breathing, really, not circulating blood, exactly, but alive -- kind of. I swore once more, silently, although he had not heard in years, and was not even present, that I would never let this happen to me. A quick end for me, in an area inconvenient for recovery by med-techs.

Still nothing on the screen. The monitor lights had returned to a more-or-less healthy shade of green, so I assumed Arthur had returned to rationality.

"Hello," I typed. After thirty years I had become fairly good at typing with two fingers. I'd had to. He was so impatient, and his time was so precious to him. And me.

"Art? How do you fee--"

"I don't feel a goddam thing, you idiot!. No, I take that back. I feel like I've been immobilized and half-frozen, like large unnecessary pieces of my body have been cut out and discarded, so they could hook up what's left of my mind to this machine, and I feel like they've hooked up the other end to a raving asshole!"

"I mean aside from that. Are you okay now?"

"Yeah, fine. How long did that one last? It was pretty bad on this end."

"They're getting longer. Even though I'm rationing what's left of you, turning you on another three or four times for an extended period would finish you, and you'd never know it if you got your wish. That's why I didn't warm you up just to blow a horn at the turn of the century."

"How bad is it?"

"Well, if I ordered them to turn you on full now, you'd have feeling in the nerves they left in you, for about thirty seconds. Then you'd feel nothing. Ever. At this rate, the technicians estimate you have four hundred minutes, and some seconds. Another three and a half hours to speak from the dead."

"Then you must have something, or you wouldn't have awakened me. You said NASA wouldn't help me. What is it?"

"Um, it's you. Things have been changing. Do you remember the money you had when you first..." pause "...came here?"

"You mean when I died? Was that the word you were searching for?"

"It's become cheaper to keep you here. They kept refining the technique. Your estate is paying less than a tenth of what it originally cost to keep you as you are."

"Wonderful. How many daquiris can I buy that I can't drink? How many steaks or women that I can't devour? How well can we redecorate that little cubicle you hide in to avoid looking at me? Can I have a racing stripe down the side of this coffin? What the hell are you talking about?! We can't bribe NASA! You've tried it three times in the last

twenty years! And we can't build a shuttle! We can't even launch an old Saturn shell! Before I died I was a writer, not a fucking billionaire!"

"LIke I said, things have changed. About fifteen years ago I used the power of attorney that you gave me. I knew the money wouldn't be missed. I started investing. I had a plan."

Nothing from the screen.

"I guessed right. You now own two promising young companies, and stock in six others. Your fortune has increased ten-fold in fifteen years."

STill nothing.

"The power of your estate has become quite formidable. We lobbied successfully for a change in the restrictions on the aerospace industry recently.

"Art?"

"you've been playing with my life for the last fifteen years"

"Art, listen --"

"you've been playing with my fucking LIFE for the last fifteen years!"

"There was a reason. You don't know --"

Again the flow of my sentence was interrupted by an angry stream of words across the screen.

"No, you don't know! When I was brought here, before they would put me under, they made my situation very clear to me. Did they tell you that you were going to be chopped up into something that couldn't live more than a few seconds on its own? Did they tell you that the only contact you'd ever have with the world again would be through a damned typewriter? And here's the best part: did they ever drill the promise into you that if the money ever stopped coming, they would take this away from you, that you'd lie buried in this plastic shell, and gasp out the seconds of your life? How dare you screw around with me like that! Oh, I wish you could be scared like I am now! From now on, every time I wake up, I'll wonder, 'Will it start hurting soon? Will the oxygen run out of the fluid in my lungs soon? Has the bastard killed me this time?'"

"Finished?"

"Quite possibly. I can't trust you any more."

At that moment how I longed for a cigarette. But I'd given them up almost sixteen years ago, more as a protest than anything else. By then it didn't matter what I did.

"Art? This is it. I've done you a hell of a service over the last thirty years. I've been the only friend you had. When you -- " pause " -- died, I was the one who came and listened to you, and didn't turn away when you asked me to do this thing for you. I've spent thirty years of my life trying to get your ass shot into orbit, but this is the end. I took those risks because I didn't think we could wait until NASA okayed space for you on the shuttle. Your estate owns a company called Trans-Solar Spacelines."

"Uh-huh. Cute."

"That company used money supplied by your other holdings to get a bill passed through congress to allow private corporations to build spacecraft."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah. A one shot rocket would be impractical for Trans-Solar, so they're going for their own shuttle. It should be ready in six years."

"You're kidding me."

"No, it may really happen, if they don't get all screwed up like NASA and the Enterprise. You have a chance at it."

"Want me to say thank you? Or that I'm sorry I misjudged you?"

"No."

"Okay."

"I've left instructions with reliable men. And with even more reliable computers. You'll be all packed up and placed on the shuttle. They'll turn you on once they're in orbit, and let you know where you are. Then you're on your own. The orbit they place your package in should last about two hundred fifty years before it begins to decay. Then you get a warm greeting from Earth's atmosphere. Is that what you wanted?"

"Yes."

"It's all arranged. Everything is foolproof. And it just might turn out the way you were expecting it. I've left a piece of machinery that should get you where you're going."

"What does that mean? Why won't you be there to do it yourself? Where will you be?"

"Dead."

"Really. Interesting. Was it my disease?"

"Nah. Plain old lung cancer. Nothing fancy. Medical thought it wouldn't even slow

me down, until my body started rejecting metal. And plastic. And living tissue. But then I've always been a little picky."

"Wanna join me?"

"No. I'm going to finish it differently. I have it all planned. A Hollywood style death. Beautiful outdoorsy scenery, music, my last breath interrupting my last sentence. At least I get to decide how I die."

"Me too."

"No, your death was decided years ago. I don't think I'll ever understand why you want to die in orbit. But I am sure it started with Asimov, Bradbury, Clarke and del Rey. And your first novel."

"Yeah, well, I don't think I could have died without ever getting off the planet at least once. I've lived most of my life out there. Hey, John?"

"Yes, Art."

"You gonna die soon?"

"Yes, Art, next week."

"Then you won't be back again?"

"No."

"Would you mind staying a while longer, and talking?"

"No. But we're using you up. I don't want you dying on me after all the trouble I've gone to to space you."

"Hell, I've got more than three hours to live. I don't really need that much in space."

"All right. What do you want to talk about?"

"How about giving me an update on the world? What's going on?"

"Sure. We've got a nude president --"

"Typo, John. You mean 'new,' don't you?"

"No. Nude. He went for the Californian vote."

"Oh."

"He's on a trip now, by the way. Congress went to their mountain fortress somewhere in North Dakota, and he's gone to find out why."

"Uh-huh."

"Aliens just broke out of Three Mile Island. Said they faked the accident so they could use the reactor to power their equipment, and now they're ready to take over the planet. We're all subjects of Norg."

"Uh-huh."

"The Sun's going to flare soon. Nothing major. It'll just kill everyone on one side of the planet, depending on the time of day."

"Yeah."

"Headcheese replaced gold as the monetary standard last year. It costs twelve pounds to keep you alive each day."

"Hmmm..."

"Transit fare's going up ten cents next Tues--"

"Hold it! don't give me any of that bullshit!"

"Okay. It's going up twenty cents tomorrow."

"Better... Hey, John? You're not going to tell me what the world is like, are you?"

"No."

"Thanks."

"Goodbye Art. Have a nice death."

"You too, John. Take it easy."

I sat up in my chair in the small gloomy white cubicle, and spoke into the microphone. Art's last words faded from the screen at the same time as the monitors became ever more faintly green, until they receded into s nothingness. Art was gone.

Once more into the mike. The lights flared like emeralds. Art was back.

"Mr. Coulson?"

"Yeah. Who's this?"

"This is the shuttle pilot, Mr. Coulson. We're in orbit. We're about to release your package."

"Fantastic!! Let me go!"

The words fairly danced onto the screen.

"Mr. Coulson, we've ejected your package from the cargo bay. Can you still read me?"

"Hell yes! I'm in orbit?"

"Perfectly, Mr. Coulson. You're all set. Good luck."

"Thank YOU! I made it! I'm in space! Wahoo!"

I left the cubicle, with the screen chattering into silence. For his last two or three hours it didn't matter where he was. He couldn't have felt it anyway.

But I did regret it. I'm actually sorry that I cost so much to keep alive fifteen years ago. Had there been any other way, he, could have circled the Earth for five hundred years for all I cared. Too bad.

What the hell. He was happy. E.K.

Murder
©1981 Spiegle

MINDSTORM

BY JAMES GLENN

It was just another little nightclub before it made history. A little nowhere called the Catalyst. The tables were arranged in crowded rows that marched at an incline from the semicircle of the stage. Patrons paid extra for the luxury of stretching their legs. It was dimly lit and noisy -- in every way a typical little neighborhood night spot.

There was the usual crowd there that night. Almost all had the long hair popular at the time and all had dyed their hair cranberry red to conform with the current fashion. They amused themselves in various ways while they waited for the show; most chose the stimulator belts.

The Stimulator was more like a padded skirt than a belt, with attachments that masturbated the wearer, male or female, at a constant frustrating rate until release came through sheer exhaustion. There were some, however, who still preferred mutual masturbation, or, rarer still, copulation.

Every one of the two hundred patrons had the same glassy-eyed vacancy in their stares, induced either by the house pill collection or their private allotments. Most chose to supplement that with one or more of the chemical intoxicant drinks sold at the club, all of which had been devised to mix with the pills. Those still able conversed trivially, letting their words drift again and again to the reason that they had all gathered that night;

Octavian, the Emoter.

He had gathered a small following with a long string of one night performances, and word of his coming had brought out twice the usual week night crowd. He was known for the richness of the images he emoted, and for the lyric beauty of his feelings. His emotions were multi-leveled and deep. That night his performance was five minutes late due to the depth of one of his emotions -- anger.

"Cragious," Octavian said, "I'm sick to death of these lousy warp ports and these unsan little clubs."

His thin features contorted into a new mask with each word, the muscles beneath his pale skin twitching or pulling to sculpt a new expression. His marionette body jutted out at angles from beneath the loose robes each time he moved. His head was shaven, as were his eyebrows, which emphasized his crystal blue eyes.

"Octavian," Cragious said, a warning tone in his voice, "you are booked to emote tonight and you will emote."

Cragious was a square small man with stubby fingers covered with rings. His hair was clipped short, but dyed red as a concession to the times.

"You will emote tonight or you void everything we've worked for. You'll never get another booking -- anywhere."

Octavian's facial muscles stretched his mouth in a rictus smile. His eyes grew cold.

"So?"

Cragious rippled like a banner in the wind.

"So I've spent every day and night for two years building you into a name!" He exploded into violent movement. "Small name, but a name! Give me two more years and you could be the biggest emoter on the planet. And you say 'So.' So you void and it's for 'zed."

The emoter stood unmoving in the center of the dressing room and let his eyes tear.

"Two years is too long!" He began to tremble.

"Save it for the customers, Oct. It means nothing to me." The little manager walked to the iris of the room and opened it with a wave. His jaw was set. "You give me something more than a second rate emote and I'll get you booked in something more than a second rate warp port."

He pointed out the iris and froze, his gray eyes commanding.

The Emoter dangled his arms by his sides, lowered his head, and moved out the iris. Five steps took him to center stage beside his equipment and the audience's seats rose like a wave about to crest. All about him took notice. Conversation in the club died. The Hostesses, nude except for credit wrist straps, stopped serving the customers and retired to the wings. It was Octavian's moment.

"Friends," he said in a rich voice, "I welcome you one and all. I am Octavian, and I promise you feelings you've only dreamed about."

Offstage, Cragious nodded in approval, glad that Octavian had slipped so easily into his usual routine. But inside Octavian's mind:

"Look at them, staring at me like cold fish, not one of them realizing how lucky

this dump is to have me here. Or how unlucky I am to be here."

"First," he continued, "I will experience a spring morning for you, then a summer evening in the mountains. I promise you it will be a night you'll remember."

"Stare, damn you to zed! I give you everything I've got, and I'm stuck with you droneheads."

"Then, friends," Octavian said, "I shall finish tonights performance with the most difficult matrix in my repertory -- first love."

He stared back at their somnambulist faces and felt disgust.

There was no applause, no expectant murmur in the crowd. They sat and drank their chemical stimulants or played with themselves idly, daring him to get on with the show. Gracefully he mounted his psi chair and began.

The chair was a Psionic projector that harnessed and broadcast Octavian's feelings, telepathically inserting them into the minds of those in the audience. The chair was a translucent blue, and pulsed with inner light. As the Emoter settled into the chair it pulsed brighter and brighter until it was aglow. His face went blank. He went through the clearing ritual, stripping away the surface emotions and finding the memories deep within him that he wished to project.

Then his imagination and the chair amplified them:

The cherry blossoms of Octavian's youth burst into bloom again. A bird sang and the melody of her song filled him with joy. His slack features moved into a smile. A brook whispered. The smell of lilacs. Color.

"Damn ingrates!"

A spring shower that tickled and compelled none to run for shelter. Each sensation as Octavian had experienced it so long ago. The skin of everyone in the club tingled with his joy. The deadpan faces melted into smiles. Someone sighed.

A delicate lace of petals haloed by the setting sun. A cool drink on a warm lawn. The sunshower continued.

"Dronehaeds!"

Clouds. Dark shapes that blotted out the warmth. Hail that stung; ice. White light ripped out of the sky.

"You use me!"

The stove was left on, the child was young.

Flaming Skin!

Someone screamed near the back of the club.

The earth split open and the terrified child fell headlong. Another terrorist bomb ripped dirt from nearby with a roar that shattered the air.

Two of the hostesses fainted.

"Octavian, I never loved you," the most beautiful girl in the ninth level class sneered at him. "You bag of bones!"

FRUSTRATION!

A man at one of the front tables leaped up and began screaming at the woman nearest him. Somebody banged another table with his fists.

RAGE.

"Bag of bones," she had said. "Acne-scarred, awkward puppet!"

HATE.

No warm body on the coldest, loneliest nights. A thousand one night stands with empty motions and no satisfaction.

LUST. HATE.

The whole world seemed to crush him in a downward spiral. It made him mad enough to kill.

KILL.

LUST. HATE. KILL.

There were screams in the club. A man slit his wrists with a bottle, then dashed himself against a wall. One woman's broken body was thrown at Octavian's feet...

You all use me, drain me, I hate you. Hate, HATE.

The chaos continued until the power drain on the projector caused an overload and blacked out the area.

It was reported as the largest mass suicide in the city's history. Two hundred five dead. The survivors described the most intense emotions they had ever experienced.

Octavian became an instant celebrity, and began a whole new style of emoting that eventually resulted in halving the world's population.

E.K.

CitiBank: 1999

A frosty boot nicks my warm hand.
I howl and grab my tattered shirt.
The faded plastic card remains beneath it,
hung from my neck;
it's added to my life.

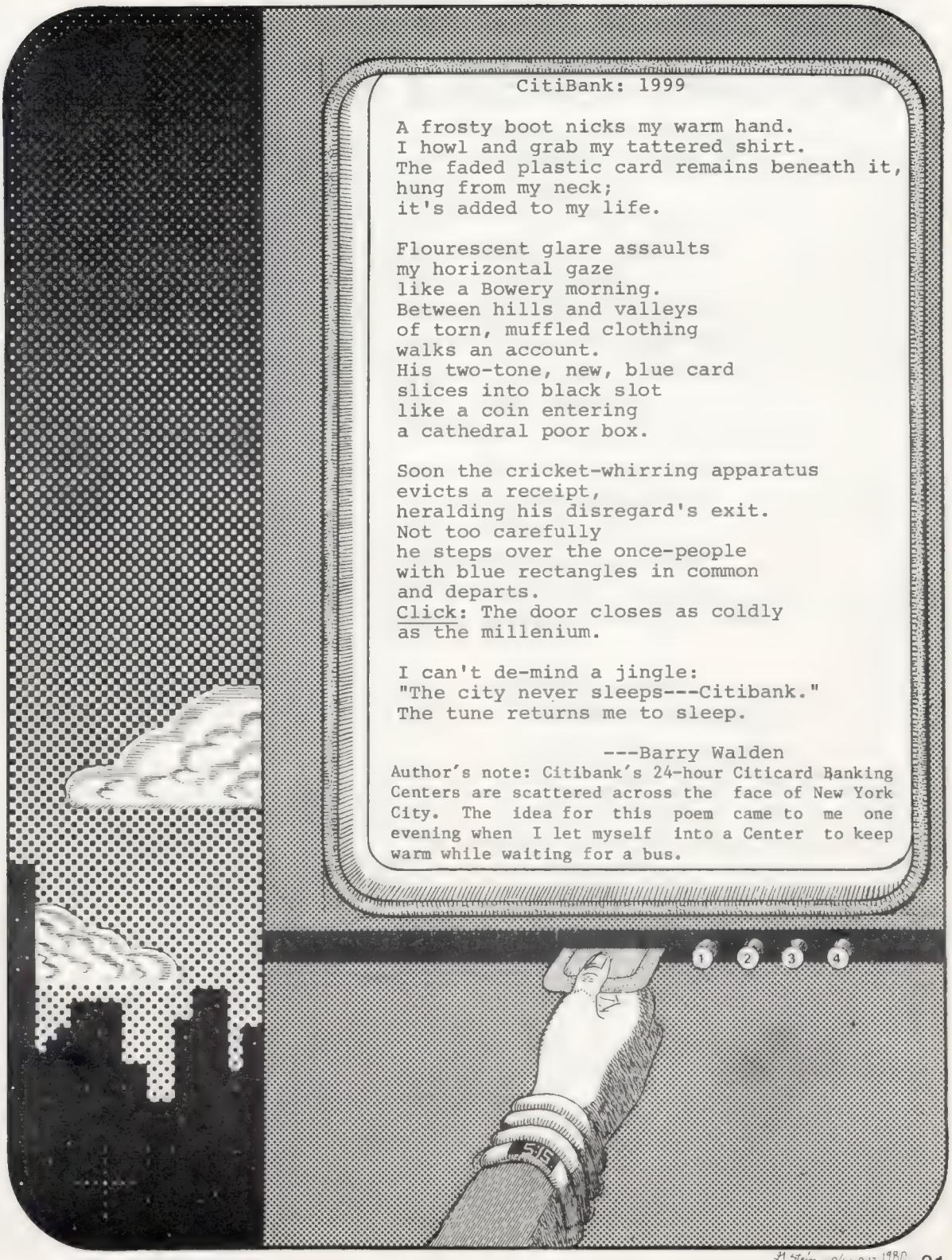
Flourescent glare assaults
my horizontal gaze
like a Bowery morning.
Between hills and valleys
of torn, muffled clothing
walks an account.
His two-tone, new, blue card
slices into black slot
like a coin entering
a cathedral poor box.

Soon the cricket-whirring apparatus
evicts a receipt,
heralding his disregard's exit.
Not too carefully
he steps over the once-people
with blue rectangles in common
and departs.
Click: The door closes as coldly
as the millenium.

I can't de-mind a jingle:
"The city never sleeps---Citibank."
The tune returns me to sleep.

---Barry Walden

Author's note: Citibank's 24-hour Citicard Banking Centers are scattered across the face of New York City. The idea for this poem came to me one evening when I let myself into a Center to keep warm while waiting for a bus.



FOCUS: THE U.N. "MOON TREATY"

Prefix by ART DULA, ESQ.

An Agreement Governing the Activites of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (Moon Treaty) was introduced in the United Nations Committee for the Peaceful Use of Outer Space (COPUOS) by the U.S.S.R. in 1971. On July 3, 1979 a compromise draft comprising an introduction and 21 articles passed COPUOS and was sent to the General Assembly for adoption. The Moon Treaty is easily one of the most far-reaching international agreements ever written. If ratified by the United States, the Moon Treaty's provisions will control the activites of the United States, as well as those of all U.S. citizens and organizations, not only on the Moon, but also in every celestial body in the solar system (other than the Earth) and in the trajectories around and between them. It is hornbook law that any pre-existing U.S. law or regulation contravening a ratified treaty is void. Thus planners who hope to exploit space resources commercially for profit through the free enterprise system would be well advised to study this Moon Treaty carefully and determine if its adoption would be in the best interests of the United States.

Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies

The States Parties to this Agreement,

Noting the achievements of States in the exploration and use of the moon and other celestial bodies,

Recognizing that the moon, as a natural satellite of the earth, has an important role to play in the exploration of outer space,

Determined to promote on the basis of equality the further development of co-operation among the States in the exploration and use of the moon and other celestial bodies,

Desiring to prevent the moon from becoming an area of international conflict,

Bearing in mind that the benefits which may be derived from the exploitation of the natural resources of the moon and other celestial bodies,

Recalling the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts ond the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space, the Convention on International Liability for Damage caused by Space Objects, and the Convention on Regulation of Objects Launched into Outer Space,

Taking into account the need to define and develop the provisions of these international instruments in relation to the moon and other celestial bodies, having regard to further progress in the exploration and use of outer space,

Have agreed on the following:

Article I

1. The provisions of this Agreement relating to the moon shall also apply to other celestial bodies within the solar system, other than the earth, except insofar as specific legal norms enter into force with respect to any of these celestial bodies.

2. For the purposes of this Agreement reference to the moon shall include orbits around or other trajectories around it.

3. This Agreement does not apply to extraterrestrial materials which reach the surface of the earth by natural means.

Article II

All activities on the moon including its exploration and use, shall be carried out in accordance with international law, in particular, the Charter of the United Nations, and taking into account the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the charter of the United Nations, adopted by the General Assembly on 24 October 1979, in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international co-operation and mutual understanding and with due regard to the corresponding interests of all other States Parties.

Article III

1. The moon shall be used by all States Parties exclusively for peaceful purposes.

2. Any threat or use of force or any hostile act or threat of hostile act on the

moon is prohibited. It is likewise prohibited to use the moon in order to commit any such act or to engage in any such threat in relation to the earth, the moon, spacecraft, the personnel of spacecraft or man-made objects.

3. States Parties shall not place in orbit around or other trajectory to or around the moon objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction or place or use such weapons on or in the moon.

4. The establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapons and the conduct of military maneuvers on the moon shall be forbidden. The use of military personnel for scientific research or for any other peaceful purposes shall not be prohibited. The use of any equipment or facility necessary for peaceful exploration and use of the moon shall also not be prohibited.

Article IV

1. The exploration and use of the moon shall be the province of all mankind and shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development. Due regard shall be paid to the interests of present and future generations as well as to the need to promote higher standards of living conditions of economic and social progress and development in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

2. States Parties shall be guided by the principle of co-operation and mutual assistance in all their activites concerning the exploration and use of the moon. International co-operation in pursuance of this Agreement should be as wide as possible and may take place on a multilateral basis, on a bilateral basis, or through international intergovernmental organizations.

Article V

1. States Parties shall inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations as well as the public and the international scientific community, to the greatest extent feasible and practicable, of their activities concerned with the exploration and use of the moon, information on the time, purposes, locations, orbital paramaters and duration shall be given in respect of each mission to the moon as soon as possible after launching, while information on the results of each mission, including scientific results shall be furnished upon completion of the mission. In case of a mission lasting more than 60 days, information on conduct of the mission, including any scientific results shall be given periodically at 30 days' intervals. For missions lasting more than six months, only significant additions to such information need be reported thereafter.

2. If a State Party becomes aware that another State Party plans to operate simultaneously in the same are of or in the same orbit around or trajectory to or around the moon, it shall promptly inform the other State of the timing of and plans for its own operations.

3. In carrying out activities under this Agreement, States Parties shall promptly inform the Secretary-General, as well as the public and the international scientific community, of any phenomena they discover in outer space, including the moon, which could endanger human life or health, as well as any indication of organic life.

Article VI

1. There shall be freedom of scientific investigation on the moon by all States Parties without discrimination of any kind, on the basis of equality and in accordance with international law.

2. In carrying out scientific investigations and in furtherance of the provisions of this Agreement the States Parties shall have the right to collect on and remove from the moon samples of its mineral and other substances. Such samples shall remain at the disposal of those States Parties which caused them to be collected and may be used by them for scientific purposes. States Parties may in the course of scientific investigations also use mineral and other substances of the moon in quantities appropriate for the support of their missions.

3. States Parties agree on the desirability of exchanging scientific and other personnel on expeditions to or installations on the moon to the greatest extent feasible and practicable.

Article VII

1 In exploring the moon, States Parties shall take measures to prevent the disruption of the existing balance of its environment whether by introducing adverse changes through the introduction of extraenvironmental matter or otherwise. States Parties shall also take measures to prevent harmfully affecting the environment of the earth through the introduction of extraterrestrial matter or otherwise.

2. States Parties shall inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the measures being adopted by them in accordance with paragraph 1 of this article and shall also to the maximum extent feasible notify him in advance of all placements by them of radioactive materials on the moon and the purposes of such placement.

3. States Parties shall report to other States Parties and to the Secretary-General concerning areas of the moon having special of such areas as international scientific preserves for which special protective arrangements are to be agreed in consultation with the competent organs of the United Nations.

Article VIII

1. States Parties may pursue their activities in the exploration and use of the moon anywhere on or below its surface, subject to the provisions of this Agreement.

2. For these purposes States Parties may, in particular:

(a) Land their space objects on the moon and launch them from the moon;

(b) Place their personnel, space vehicles, equipment, facilities, stations and installations anywhere on or below the surface of the moon.

Personnel, space vehicles, equipment, facilities, stations and installations may move or be moved freely over or below the surface of the moon.

3. Activities of States Parties in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 of this article shall not interfere with the activities of other States Parties on the moon. Where such interference may occur, the States Parties shall undertake consultations in accordance with article XV, paragraphs 2 and 3.

Article IX

1. States Parties may establish manned and unmanned stations on the moon. A State Party establishing a station shall use only that area which is reasonable for the needs of the station and shall immediately inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the location and purposes of that station. Subsequently, at annual intervals that State shall likewise inform the Secretary-General whether the station continues to exist and whether its purposes have changed.

2. Stations shall be installed in such a manner that they do not impede the free access to all areas of the moon of personnel, vehicles and equipment of other States Parties conducting activities on the moon in accordance whith the provisions of this Agreement or of article I of the Treaty Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies.

Article X

1. States Parties shall adopt all practicable measures to safeguard the life and health of persons on the moon. For this purpose they shall regard any person on the moon as an astronaut within the meaning of article V of the Treaty Governing the Activities of States on the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and other Celestial Bodies and as part of the personnel of a spacecraft within the meaning of the Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space.

2. States Parties shall offer shelter in their stations, installations, vehicles and other facilities to persons in distress on the moon.

Article XI

1. The moon and its natural resources are the common heritage of mankind which finds its expression in the provisions of this agreement and in particular in paragraph 5 of this article.

2. The moon is not subject to national appropriation by any claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means.

3. Neither the surface nor the substrate of the moon, nor any part thereof or natural resources in place, shall become property of any State, international, intergovernmental

or non governmental entity or of any State, international, intergovernmental entity or of any natural person. The placement of personnel, space vehicles, equipment, facilities, stations and installations on or below the surface of the moon, including structures connected with their surface or subsurface, shall not create a right of ownership over the surface or the subsurface of the moon or any areas thereof. The foregoing provisions are without prejudice to the international regime referred to in paragraph 5 of this article.

4. States Parties have the right to exploration and use of the moon without discrimination of any kind on a basis of equality, and in accordance with international law and the terms of this Agreement.

5. States Parties to this Agreement hereby undertake to establish an international regime, including appropriate procedures, to govern the exploitation of the natural resources of the moon as such exploitation is about to become feasible. This provision shall be implemented in accordance with article XVIII of this agreement.

6. In order to facilitate the establishment of the international regime referred to in paragraph 5 of this article, States Parties shall inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations as well as the public and the international scientific community to the greatest extent feasible and practicable of any natural resources they may discover on the moon.

7. The main purpose of the international regime to be established include:

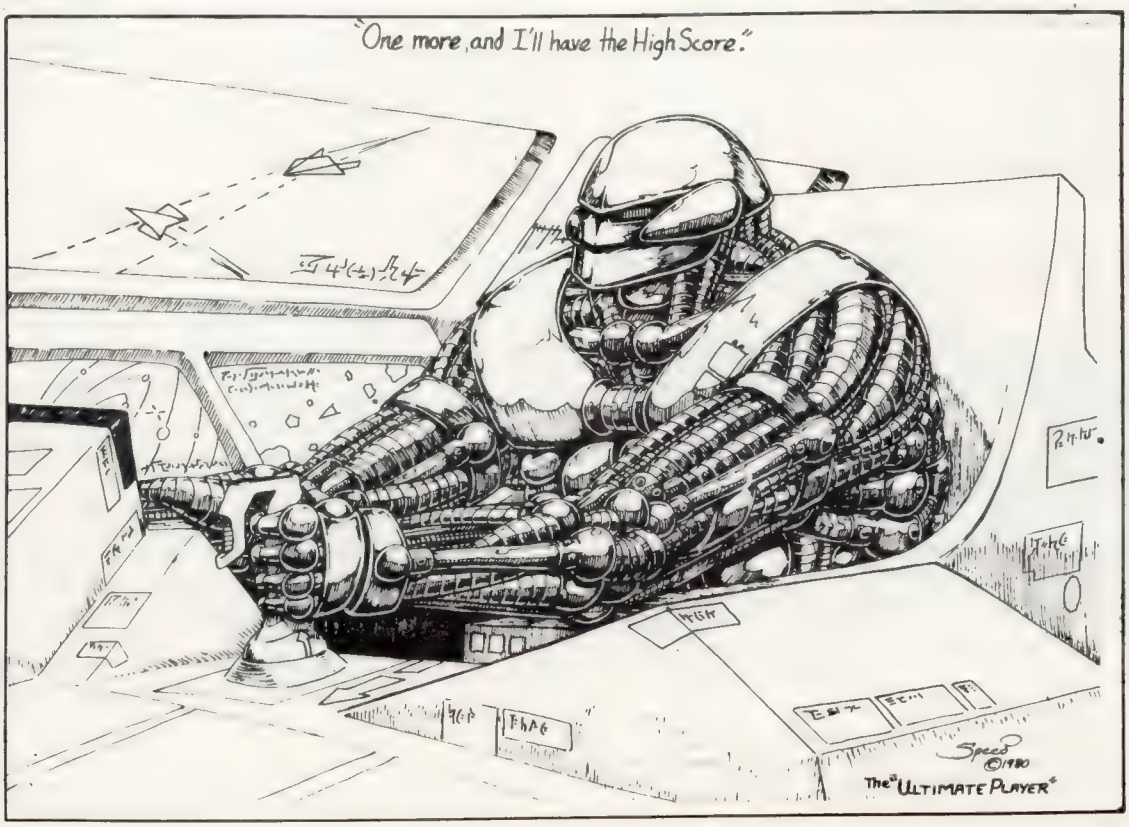
(a) The orderly and safe development of the natural resources of the moon;

(b) The rational management of those resources;

(c) The expansion of opportunities in the use of those resources; and

(d) An equitable shaing by all States Parties in the benefits derived from those resources, whereby the interests and needs of the developing countries which have contributed either directly or indirectly to the exploration of the moon shall be given special consideration.

8. All avtivities with respect to the natural resources of the moon shall be carried out in a manner compatible with the



purposes specified in paragraph 7 of this article and the provisions of article VI paragraph 2, of this Agreement.

Article XII

1. States Parties shall retain jurisdiction and control over their personnel, vehicles, equipment, facilities, station and installations on the moon. The ownership of space vehicles, equipment, facilities, stations and installations shall not be affected by their prescence.

2. Vehicles, installations and equipment or their component parts found in places other than their intended location shall be dealt with in accordance with article V of the Agreement on Assistance to Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space.

3. In the event of an emergency involving a threat to human life, States Parties may use the equipment, vehicles, installations, facilities or supplies of other States Parties on the moon. Prompt notification of such use shall be made to the Secretary-General of the United Nations or State Party concerned.

Article XIII

A State Party which learns of the crash landing, forced landing or other unintended landing on the moon of a space object, or its component parts, that were not launched by it, shall promptly inform the launching State Party and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article XIV

1. States Parties to this Agreement shall bear international responsibility for national activities on the moon whether such activities are carried on by governmental agencies of by non-governmental entities, and for assuring that national activities are carried out in conformity with the provisions set forth in the present Agreement. States Parties shall ensure that non-goevernmental entities under their jurisdiction shall engage in activities on the moon only under the authority and continuing supervision of the appropriate State Party.

2. States Parties recognize that detailed arrangements concerning liability for damage caused on the moon, in addition to the provisions of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and other Celestial Bodies and the Convention on International Liability for Damage caused by Space Objects, may become necessary as a result of more extensive activities on the moon. Any such arrangement shall be elaborated in accordance with the procedure provided for in article XVIII of this Agreement.

Article XV

1. Each State Party may assure itself that the activities of other States Parties in the exploration and use of the moon are compatible with the provisions of this Agreement. To this end, all space vehicles, equipment, facilities, stations and installations on the moon shall be open to other States Parties. Such States Parties shall give reasonable advance notice of a projected visit, in order that appropriate consultations may be held and that maximum precautions may be taken to assure safety and to avoid interference with normal operations in the facility to be visited. In pursuance of this article, any State Party may act on its own behalf or with the full or partial assistance of any other State Party or through appropriate international organizations in the framework of the United Nations and in accordance with the Charter.

2. A State Party which has reason to believe that another State Party is not fulfilling the obligations incumbent upon it pursuant to this Agreement or that another State Party is interfering with the rights which the former State has under this Agreement may request consultations with that Party. A State Party receiving such request shall enter into such consultations without delay. Any other State Party which requests to do so shall be entitled to take part in the consultations. Each State Party participating in such consultations shall seek a mutually acceptable resolution of any controversy and shall bear in mind the rights and interests of all States Parties. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall be informed of the results of the consultations and transmit the information received to all States Parties concerned.

3. If the consultations do not lead to a mutually acceptable settlement which has due regard for the rights and interests of all

the States Parties, the parties concerned shall take all measures to settle the dispute by other peaceful means of their choice and appropriate to the circumstances and the nature of the dispute. If difficulties arise in connection with the opening of consultations or if consultations do not lead to a mutually acceptable settlement any State Party may seek the assistance of the Secretary-General without seeking the consent of any other State Party concerned, in order to resolve the contoversy. A state Party which does not maintain diplomatic relations with another State Party concerned shall participate in such consultations at tis choice, wither itself or through another State Party or the Secretary-General, as intermediary.

Article XVI

With the exceptions of articles XVII to XXI, references in this Agreement to States shall be deemed to apply to any international inter-governmental organization which conducts space activities if the organization declares its acceptance of the rights and obligations provided for in this Agreement and if a majority of the States members of the organization are States Parties to this Agreement and to the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and other Celestial Bodies. States members of any such organization which are States Parties to this agreement shall take all appropriate steps to ensure that the organization make a declaration in accordance with the foregoing.

Article XVII

Any State Party to this Agreement may propose amendments to the Agreement. Amendments shall enter into force for each State Party to the Agreement accepting the amendments upon their acceptance by a majority of the States Parties to the Agreement and thereafter for each remaining State Party to the Agreement on the date of acceptance by it.

Article XVIII

Ten years after the entry into force of this Agreement, the question of the review of the Agreement shall be included in the provisional agenda of the United Nations General Assemble in order to consider, in the light of past application of the Agreement, whether it requires revision. However, at any time after the Agreement has been in force for five years, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as depository, shall, at the request of one-third of the States Parties, convene a conference of the States Parties to the Agreement and with the concurrence of the majority of the States Parties, convene a conference of the States Parties to review this agreement. A review conference shall also consider the question of the implementation of the provisions of article XI, paragraph 5, on the basis of the principle referred to in paragraph 1 of that article and taking into account in particular any relevant technological developments.

article XIX

1. This Agreement shall be open for signature by all States at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

2. This agreement shall be subject to ratification by signatory States. Any State which does not sign this Agreement before its entry into force in accordance to paragraph 3 of this article may accede to it at any time. Instruments of ratification or accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

3. This Agreement shall enter into force on the tirtieth day following the date of deposit of the fifth instrument of ratification.

4. For each State depositing its instrument of ratification or accession after the entry into force of this Agreemnt, it shall enter into force on the following the date of deposit of any such instrument.

5. The Secretary-General shall promptly inform all signatory and acceding States of the date of each signature, the date of deposit of each instrument of ratification or accession to this Agreement, the date of its entry into force or other notices.

Article XX

Any State or Party to this Agreement may give notice of its withdrawal from the Agreement one year after its entry into force by written notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Such withdrawal shall take effect one year from the date of receipt of this notification.

E.K.

Hammer

ROUNDABOUT

BY VAN VICTORIA

Jack MacGregor squirmed inside his space suit. He doubted if he would ever get used to wearing one. Supposedly the latest in comfort, the suit seemed to poke and pinch him in the most unpleasant places.

"Nervous?" asked the space tug pilot. Like most pilots she liked needling any passenger who was the least bit uncomfortable in space.

"No, but I think the suit is. I swear the thing is trying to work its way off me. I don't know how you guys can live in these suits."

"Oh, you get used to it," she said with a condescending smile. "You'd better screw on your head and get back to the air lock. We're coming up on the Hammer. Don't worry, I'll be around if you get into trouble."

She gave MacGregor the thumbs up sign as he made his way to the aft of the tug. MacGregor thought to himself, "What she means is she'll be around to pick up the pieces if I blow up."

The tug eased up nicely next to the ship called Hammer. The origin of the name was obvious. The ship looked like a hammer. At one end was a large, mostly rectangular engine. On the end of a long tube was the small compartment for the pilot.

"That's an awful lot of ship to move just one man," MacGregor said to the man tending the airlock.

"Just for you," the man said. "Good luck," he added as MacGregor made the short leap to the cockpit of the massive ship. The hatch was open and he slipped himself into the seat and brought the hatch down, sealing the ship. Though there was an atmosphere inside, MacGregor kept his suit shut. Years as a test pilot had taught him that survival lay in extreme caution.

The adrenaline began to flow through his veins as he made the last minute checks with the space station. He tried to think of this as just another job; getting over-excited was a sure way to get himself killed. Still, he couldn't lie to himself about the specialness of the ship. The Hammer was humanity's gateway to the stars, the first starship.

MacGregor could still hear Dr. Wolfe, the head engineer, speaking on the importance of the project.

"Over ten billion dollars have been spent by this organization in the last five years. I, along with a host of scientists, have dedicated my career to this most important project."

MacGregor admired his speaking ability, but didn't see the importance of the spiel to himself. The test pilot got little of the blame or credit in the testing of new ships. But he did get paid well, as long as he stayed alive to collect.

Over the radio MacGregor heard one engineer say, "We're polarizing the windows on the Hammer." This was done to cut down on the pilot's disorientation during the anticipated wrenching shock of transition to hyperspace. MacGregor noticed that there was less than a minute to jump time, and he spent the time re-checking his suit and ship.

"Ready for jump," he heard a voice say.

"Let her go," MacGregor replied.

"Jump." The voice echoed inside MacGregor's head.

The jump was to be instantaneous. MacGregor felt a little uneasy as he sat alone in the ship. If the jump was successful he would be the most isolated man in history, light years from Earth. Slowly he depolarized the windows to look outside. Instantly he thought to himself, "Boy, that planet looks a whole lot like Earth." Then he caught sight of a structure that looked suspiciously like the station. MacGregor felt a strange mixture of relief and disappointment as he heard Dr. Wolfe exclaim in no uncertain terms, "Oh shit!"

MacGregor tried to make himself comfortable in the utilitarian plastic chair. On the whole, he had to admit that he had been rather lucky. All hell had broken loose when the mission was reported to have failed. Reporters asked a thousand embarassing questions. Politicians demanded everything from instant abandonment of the project to wholesale change of personnel, from Dr. Wolfe to the lowliest cook. On the video there were dozens of scientists explaining how they knew all along that the ship would never work. MacGregor had managed to miss most of the fire. Nobody asks a guinea pig why the experiment failed. He was wondering why Dr. Wolfe felt it necessary to include him in the hastily formed committee that was trying to put together both a report to give to the media people, and a coherent plan of action to the politicians and administrators. MacGregor tried to follow what was going on, but for the most part, it was a mathematical

debate that was miles above him. Apparently all the scientists agreed that everything checked out to the last decimal place.

MacGregor's interest picked up as the committee tried to figure out what to tell the press. Dr. Wolfe was adamant about telling them nothing at all.

"They don't know anything about our work. Any time spent explaining to them is wasted time. Time is money. And no matter what we say, they'll print what they like."

Tammy Lin, a short blonde with a touch of oriental in her eyes, stood up and replied, "No, doctor, we should come out with the truth. We tell the truth and forget it. Then we don't have to keep checking ourselves to see that our stories are consistent. It was an experiment, and we were working on the edge of our knowledge. Failures are to be expected."

That last line made MacGregor frown. Somehow, being on the edge of knowledge made him uneasy., especially since it was his life at stake. But coming from Tammy it didn't sound as bad as it might have. He wondered why he had never noticed her before.

He spent the last twenty minutes trying to catch Tammy's eye, which was difficult, as he was sitting in the back of the room, and she was sitting up front. The meeting ended with the scientists coming to some sort of conclusion, although MacGregor wasn't quite sure what that was. Something about playing it by ear while sticking to a carefully detailed plan.

MacGregor remained seated until Tammy passed by on her way out. He then casually leaped from his chair and pushed his way to her side.

"Hi, my name is Jack MacGregor."

She returned a blank stare.

"You know, the one standing on the edge, looking into the deep unknown"

"Huh?" She didn't seem the least bit interested.

"The test pilot."

"Oh, yes, Major MacGregor."

"No, just plain MacGregor now. Retired. Anyway, why don't we go to the bar and have a drink? Maybe we could discuss the future of the project. Or you could explain to me in simple, one syllable words exactly what went wrong."

"What went wrong!" Tammy looked startled. "Then you don't know?" She grabbed MacGregor by the arm and started leading him down the hall.

"Uh, the bar's down at the other end of the station."

"We aren't going to the bar. I'm taking you to my cabin."

MacGregor would have smiled, except that the look on Tammy's face and the tone of her voice clearly told him that she was deadly serious.

MacGregor was fascinated by Tammy's cabin. Like all but the highest ranking staff she was only rated a single room. Still, she had managed to put her stamp on the cramped quarters. Especially amusing were the numerous large stuffed enimals. The drain on her space allotment on the shuttle must have been horrendous.

Tammy seemed somewhat ill-at-ease.

"I don't know how they missed briefing you, but I suppose you might have been overlooked because of the excitement. You haven't talked to any press yet, have you?"

"More liked they didn't talk to me. Briefed about what?"

"The experiment <u>did</u> work."

"But at the meeting, you guys went through a whole song and dance about how it <u>didn't</u> work."

"That was just for the press."

"It was a closed meeting. Secret. No press allowed."

"They were listening, one way or another."

"Uh.. right. Okay, so the experiment did work. Why aren't I circling some planet around Alpha Centauri?" he demanded.

"We aren't sure. How much do you know about mathematics?"

"Just enough to bluff my way through some undergrad courses."

"Nothing."

"That's about it."

"Well, I'll try to make it simple."

"Thanks." Tammy was oblivious to the sarcasm.

"The drive did work. You left normal space. The cameras couldn't catch it, but the computers definitely agree that there were a few micro-seconds when the ship ceased to exist."

"So I did go to Alpha Centauri?"

"We don't know. We're looking over the tapes from the onboard computer to see what they say. Right now we aren't sure."

"But where else could I have gone?"

"No place, Every place. Maybe a parallel universe. We don't know."

"I don't understand, but that's not important. What I want to know is, why didn't you tell the truth and say the ship went somewhere, but you don't know where?"

"We had a closed meeting --"

"That was really closed."

"Dr. Wolfe decided that it would be better to say the ship went nowhere than to admit that we just don't know where it did go. We plan to send the ship out again, and the press might not react favorably to our sending a human being out under such uncertain conditions."

A look of startled realization came to her face.

"Maybe that's why you were never told. I'm sorry."

"Sorry that I'm going into deep space blind, or that you just told me a top secret?"

Tammy rose suddenly, went to the door and slid it open.

"You're cruel. Just get out."

MacGregor didn't get up.

"Look, it was just a joke. No reason to get excited. I didn't become a test pilot because I was scared of dying. It comes with the territory."

"You're not worried or mad or scared?" Tammy looked unsure, the strain of the last few hours showing on her face.

"No, yes, and a little bit. A little fear keeps the blood flowing. I am pissed that I wasn't old the truth about the failure. I don't like being pushed around without my knowledge or consent. I suppose there's not much I can do about it, though.

"Why don't you sit down? I promise not to let out that you blew the big secret."

Tammy sighed. "Well, I don't want to seem curt, but I do have a lot of work to do."

"Okay. I'll just go out and see if I can dig up some more top secrets."

Tammy frowned as MacGregor left.

MacGregor was reading the latest issue of Space Stories in his bunk. He had kept to his cabin since his discussion with Tammy. So far he had no word about a second try at the mission. His feelings about that were mixed, to say the least. To keep his mind off the problem he had tried to get involved in some fiction, but was having much success.

There was a knock at the door.

"Come in."

He brightened when he saw it was Tammy.

"Hello. I just came to say I'm sorry."

"Sorry for what?"

"Sorry for a lot of things. I guess the largest of those is my casual attitude toward the test pilot. Until I met you I never thought about the human life involved in the project. It was just another interesting mathematical puzzle."

"Forget it."

"You seem so casual about the whole thing."

"It's ripping me apart. But I don't think about it. If I did, it'd drive me crazy. I try not to think of death as a personal thing. What about the next jump."

That's my official reason for being here. Two days from now we make another jump. We think we know what went wrong. Probably the same thing will happen again. It might be the world's largest merry-go-round."

"What do you mean?"

"We've always thought space was curved, but assumed it was an open curve, like a saddle. But the first jump suggests that it is a closed curve. Apparently you left this space and went clean around it and back during those few micro-seconds."

"So what's the use of another jump?"

"We think the same thing will happen again, but we're not sure. We're installing some extra recording instruments on the ship to try to get more information on this jump."

"So I'm still right on the edge."

"I hope not."

"Yeah? I don't like people playing with my life, especially cold-hearted bastards like Wolfe. I don't mind taking a chance on death with untested mahcinery, but Wolfe is tipping the scales in the direction of my oblivion. If I survive this next cosmic journey you send me on, I think maybe I'll give the press all the facts on that first trip."

Tammy had nothing to say to that.

Trying hard to remember whether deja-vu was only what one thought one experienced before or actual events, MacGregor kept his mind occupied during those last minutes between boarding the Hammer and jump time. All the deception floating around the station disturbed him. It wasn't that he was all that

honest, it was just that he liked things simple. And that he preferred to be told the actual risks of any situation he was placed in. Wolfe was lying to him and the press. He was lying to both. And perhaps Tammy was lying to all of them. Maybe the jump was sure suicide.

If it did kill him, things would be considerably simpler. Exposing Wolfe's deceit, and his knowledge of the wild uncertainty of this second trip might hurt Tammy. But he didn't like being manipulated, herded like some mindless animal...

"Ready for jump?"

"Ready."

"Jump!" The voice sounded as if it were receding down a long, long tunnel.

Silence weighed on him heavily. Somehow he knew that he was no longer circling Earth. The windows were still polarized, and the only light was the glow of the instrument panel, but still he sensed that the Earth was far behind. Breathing deeply he flipped the switch that cleared the window.

No Earth. No space station. No sun. He saw a star, but had no way to tell if it was Alpha Centauri. He tried to look around to see Alpha Centauri minor, when suddenly someone sucked the whole universe into a small ball three inches in front of his nose. He felt himself being drawn inside out into that spot of oblivion. He wished he could feel pain, so he could scream, but there was nothing. Nothing but utter disorientation.

Then, as suddenly as it had begun, he was back in real space, with the Earth floating reassuringly in front of him. Wanting only to reach out and kiss it he started to let the air out of the cockpit, and open the hatch.

Somehow he had stayed for a longer time at his destination this trip. He had no explanation for the difference this time, but then that wasn't his job.

As he slipped out of the Hammer, the space tug pilot was easing her ship up. She was grinning from ear to ear, and giving him the thumbs up sign. MacGregor blew her a kiss.

This time all the press wanted a statment from the pilot, now hero. All hell had broken loose on the station when the ship disappeared. MacGregor had been wondering what he would say. The decision had come up the truth. He stood there in front of fifteen newsmen with his mouth open, ready to launch into a tirade about the deceit and negligence of Wolfe and his gang. He'd made it back alive, there had been no danger after all, but still, the princip --

Tammy was standing at the back of the crowd, watching him.

"I could've been killed!" he was thinking. "They never told me, and, and..."

Tammy was watching him.

"Those bas--"

Watching him.

"Mr. MacGregor, could you shed some light on the apparent failure of the first mission? We were all led to believe that simple equipment malfunction was the cause, but there have been rumors flying around..."

There was a murmured chorus of low "Yeahs..." from the crowd.

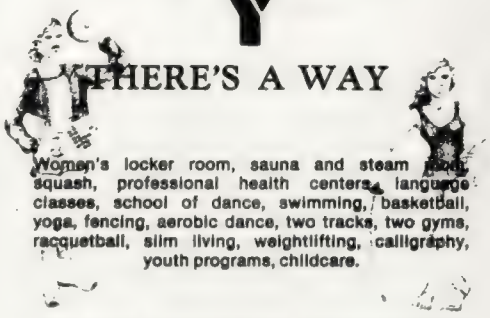
Pause.

"Mr. MacGregor?"

"Um? Oh, yeah..."

"Fucked if I know." E.K.

WHERE THERE'S A



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SALAD DAYS

BY JEFF GRIMSHAW

I was awake early: sunlight flooded the bed because I had forgotten to draw the curtains. I nudged Tina but she was empty. I opened one of her eyes and checked the pupil to assure myself that everything was stable. From the land-side window I saw a car topping a distant hill. Tina must be out investigating that, I decided.

I flopped into bed and joined her. I used to enjoy lifting out while my body was on its feet and then watching it crumple. But none of our bodies are what they once were, and we must be reasonable these days.

The car was a gray Toyota, eight or ten years old. It was hard to say how old the driver was -- her skin was pock-marked and creased, but that means nothing. There were no plates on the car. From the way she rode the brake going downhill it was plain she wasn't used to our New England topography.

Tina was sailing alongside the car, fingertips light on the driver's door.

"Well?" I said.

"There's a mailing envelope on the back seat with Virgil's address on it. Does she look like a lab assistant to you?"

I lifted my eyebrow, or would have, if I'd had eyebrows.

She continued, "Anyway, she's used her CB once since I've been riding -- to find out if any bridges are out or anything. Of course nobody answered her. What do you think?"

"I don't know. Hulk her and let's go to the beach."

"Sweet. I want to stick by her a bit. She has some good tapes in the car, and she might play one. She has the Debussy String Quartet by the Julliard. It's supposed to be wonderful. Why don't you plug Tina in and take her to the beach? I'll drop along in a bit."

"You're Tina," I said.

"You know what I mean."

I acquiesced and whipped home. I dropped into my body and stuffed some towels into a beach bag. I rolled Tina's body onto its back and pushed a control cartridge into the spinal socket.

"Put on a bathing suit. Meet me out front. We're cycling to the beach."

We pedaled to my favorite spot, just past the jetty. I spread the blanket and began to make a sandwich. The green light on Tina's control cartridge blinked. I finished making the sandwich and then yanked the cartridge free.

Tina was back.

"Don't eat that sandwich," she said. "Virgil wants you to come over for lunch. God, I thought you weren't going to let me in until after you'd eaten that thing! Is it tuna? I didn't know we had any around the house."

"Who was that woman?"

"She's from Oklahoma."

Further information was delayed while she wolfed down the sandwich.

"I bet that was good. She says she read about Virgil in the National Enquirer or something, one of those things, and she wants to see if we can get in touch with her husband's spirit. Isn't that a piss?"

"Her husband is dead, you mean?"

"Mmmmm. Virgil is being very nice to her. She says she got the address from the Food and Drug Administration."

In spite of myself I smiled.

"He wants you over for lunch because you're so good at smelling out Feds and things, even if your nose isn't as good as it used to be." She tweeked my nose self-consciously, like a bad actress. "I think she's sincere, though. Oh, lose that hang-dog look! They're having salad."

"What's the occasion?"

"John Pendergraff bought the farm. Save me some."

"Aren't you coming?"

"Not like this. I just don't feel like clomping around in old Tina today, that's all. I'll be around. Send her home," -- she tapped herself on the breastbone -- "and get over to Virgil's. See if you can dupe some tapes for me."

Then she was gone again. I hate it when she calls her body "Tina," as if she were someone else. It's an irritating affectation, all too common up here.

I dug the bicycles out of the beach and blew the sand from the gears with a rubber bulb. I slapped the control cartridge back into place and told Tina's body to go home. Then I sped toward town. The road grew more substantial after the first quarter mile, and when the first houses appeared I was rolling on hot concrete. It ocurred to me that it was brutally hot: I saw everything through waves of heat and the insect-splattered lenses of my Champion Aviators. The gray Toyota loomed ahead against the curb outside Virgil's

house, rippling like someone's discarded underwear in a tree top. I hopped off the bike and trotted up to the porch.

"Greg?" called Virgil. The inside of the house was so dark that I could only see the gleam of his bald pate as he nodded to me.

"C'mon in. Mary's making a salad. Hey, you're soaked! Did you race here, kid? It's 95 outside. Buy a thermometer."

I agreed indulgently and followed him into the breakfast nook. The woman from Oklahoma (Mrs. Goodspeed, Virgil whispered as we entered), was sipping coffee with Mary. I sat down and Mary pushed a plate of donuts at me. They were sugared. I though that it was one of Virgil's subtle jokes at first, then realized that he had simply bought what was available. Mrs. Goodspeed seemed to like them, so I imagined they were tasty. The rest of us can't tell.

We chatted for a long time about dishonest garage mechanics and what-it's-like-to-live-on-the-ocean while Virgil beamed benignly from the kitchen doorway. In the dim light Mrs. Goodspeed didn't seem quite so weatherbeaten. Whenever she mentioned her husband, as in -- "My husband loved the ocean. He was born in California, but this is the first time I've ever seen it." -- Mary would fix me with a Meaningful Look over her coffee cup. It was almost funny.

A high frequency beep-beep-beep sounded in the hall and Virgil scuttled to answer it.

"This is so incredible," said Mrs. Goodspeed, shaking her head and smiling in a most disconcerting way.

"Mrs. Goodspeed was here when Tina dropped in before," said Mary by way of explanation. Mrs. Goodspeed blushed and had another donut.

Virgil came in with the Proxy Box. He cleared a spot on the table and placed it down carefully. The Proxy Box looks like a lump of white plastic mounted on a metal rectangle. There's a toggle on the side. Virgil flicked the toggle and the lump underwent a subtle color change.

"It's for Greg," said Virgil with a smirk.

The color change indicated that someone had dropped into it.

"Greg," said the Proxy Box, shapind itself into a good approximation of Tina's face. "You sent Tina home but you didn't tell her to yank the control cartridge out when she got there. So she's sitting in the bedroom like a zombie and I'm stuck outside."

"Ha ha," said Virgil, with forced good humor that didn't even fool Mrs. Goodspeed, who therefore felt obliged to fake a laugh herself.

I forced one too and got up to phone from the hall.

"This is so wonderful," said Mrs. Goodspeed.

Tina's body picked up the phone in ten rings.

"Pull out the control cartridge. Tina wants to get back in."

I hung up. "All clear, Sweet," I called. "Go home and tend the garden."

When I returned to the table the Proxy Box was returning to its natural state. Mary was in the kitchen, running cold water over the lettuce. Virgil leaned across the table, speaking to Mrs. Goodspeed in a low intent voice. Her eyes darted to me, then back to Virgil.

"Give Mary a hand with the salad," said Virgil. He made it sound like a request.

I chopped up some peppers and diced a little tub of cheese. I decided that I didn't like Mrs. Goodspeed and I mentioned it to Mary, who nodded as she mixed oil and vinegar in a blue bowl.

"Grind those tumors and sprinkle them over the dressing, will you?"

"I hope you have a spare taste cartridge," I said. I knew they did.

"The way your mouth is watering, you don't need one," Mary said. "You know, you should have killed her on the road."

"She's not from the government. If she was, there would have been Oklahoma plates and she wouldn't be blushing and coughing every two seconds."

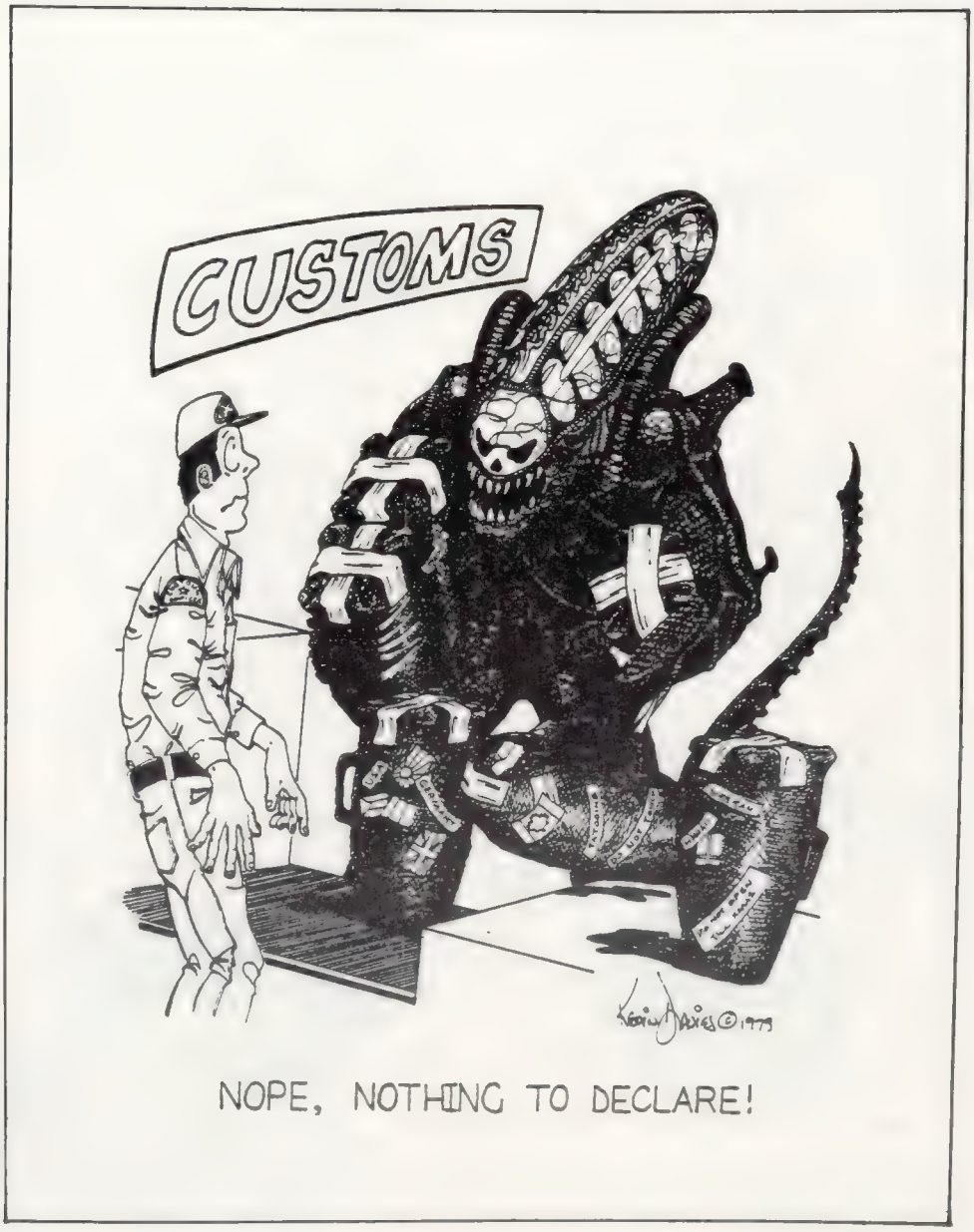
"Even so."

"I know. I wanted to hulk her, but Tina wanted to stick by her and hear a tape or something. What can you do? She might have been a lab assistant."

'Lab assistant' had been a running joke with us ever since a remarkably inept reporter had tried to infiltrate us in that capacity.

"But she's telling the truth about why she's here, yes?"

"God knows it fits in with our publicity."



NOPE, NOTHING TO DECLARE!

"Then the FDA is giving our address to every fool who asks for it, even though they know what we'll do. If we can get away with it we'll hulk her," -- that's our euphemism for burning out the cerebrum -- "and force grow the tumors. If she has family, we'll implant a socket and she can search for her husband in earnest.

"Johnny Pendergraff is gone." She tapped a jar of beautiful purple tumors.

"The rest of us will not be ready to harvest for months. Really, Greg, she's metabolically ideal."

"Well then I guess it's a good thing I didn't kill her on the road. But I wish I had."

"I know how you feel, believe me, Greg. You know Virgil, though -- no opportunity lost to... to... what's the word? -- I don't know."

She dressed the salad and we popped our taste cartridges in before re-entering the breakfast nook.

Mrs. Goodspeed and Virgil were both grinning. I don't know what he told her to produce her smile, but his was easy to decipher. Halfway through the meal Mary squeezed my knee and nodded happily. Mrs. Goodspeed had no family.

There was a perverse part of me that wanted to grab Mrs. Goodspeed's hand and press it to the malignant swelling on my abdomen, eyes a-twinkle, and then to the socket on my spine.

"Without these over-ride sockets, Mrs. Goodspeed," I could have said then, "the pain would drive us crazy. Out-of-body travel is extremely carcinogenic. And get this, Mrs. Goodspeed -- Some of us up here don't put up with the cancer so we can travel out-of-body, some of us," -- I could have glanced at Virgil here -- "put up with out-of-body travel so we can..."

At that point I could have trailed off and smiled and gone back to my meal. But I repressed that perverse part of myself and enjoyed the meal.

After lunch (though it was so late that it might as well have been dinner), Virgil pushed back from the table and said, "Put those dishes down, Greg, and sting that old piano!"

And I did, running through my limited repertoire of bastard ragtime. I thought of doing Claire d'Lune for Mrs. Goodspeed and my own amusement, but my playing has detiorated quite a bit of late -- I've never gotten used to playing without feeling the keys beneath my fingers -- and I didn't like Mrs. Goodspeed. When I finished she applauded politely and we all reminisced about old television programs just like real friends.

I took my time riding home, though it was nearly dark and probably not so hot.

Tina was sleeping. The thin sheet clearly defined her ruined body. I stood watching her for a long time. Then I sat on the edge of the bed and whispered in her ear until she woke up.

"Salad's in the refrigerator," I said.

"Did you dupe those tapes?"

"No. I will. Do you feel like snapping my sexual response cartridge in?"

I kissed her jaw and she decided to smile.

"'Kay. But don't put mine in. Is that all right?" I hesistated. "It just hurts so much. But I like it okay without the cartridge, really, Greg."

"All right."

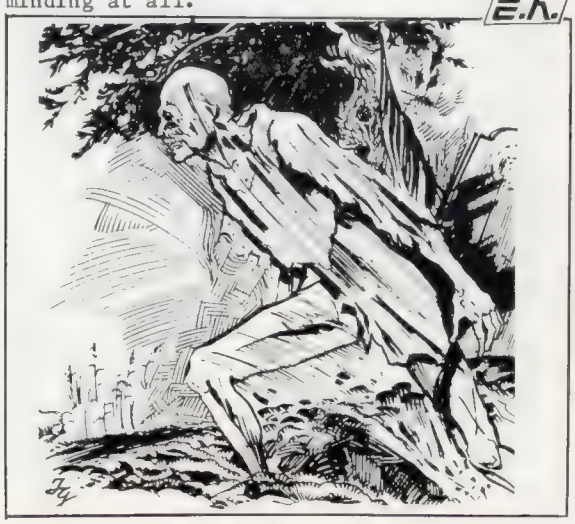
She fished the cartridge out of the drawer. I bent down to give her access and she pressed it into place. The pain was bad, though not unbearable. I could feel each malignancy distinctly.

"Okay?" she asked.

"Sure. I kissed her."

Whether it was the pain or just the knowledge that Tina was feeling nothing I couldn't say. After a few frustrating minutes I rolled onto my belly, she yanked the cartridge free, she nuzzled me.

In a little while we both lifted out and rose, laughing and touching, through the ceiling and over the breakers, feeling nothing but not minding, not minding, not minding at all.



DETOUR

BY DAN WILLENS

It was a routine procedure: I petitioned the University for permission to do some field work, notified the proper authorities, fasted for three days on liquid nutrients, and showed up at the Centre with the field reference tapes I thought I'd be needing. I sat down in the cheerless white waiting room, and a quarter of an hour later a middle-aged, brown-haired woman with the white uniform and bland demeanour of a time-space transfer engineer appeared and checked my papers.

"Destination?" she inquired perfunctorily.

"Ialchasa, that's G-B 2345+97 III, around 675 CE, their dating. The, er, temporal coordinates should be on one of those disks somewhere..."

"Hm-hm," she grunted, holding the documents with an air of boredom.

"If it's possible, I'd like to be let down just a trifle early... I'm studying the Trans-Cylondia Wars, and if you can get me there around 650, I'd be able to trace the development of their second industrial revolution."

Academic that I am, I nearly started off on a tirade about the historical importance of the Ialchasan chemical energy base and its effect on their geo-politics, but an icy silence restrained me. This woman was a t-s transfer engineer, a Techno, and beyond curiousity about such silly irrelevancies. I was tempted to remind her that her job was justified by Theoros like me, and that as soon as academicians lost interest in history, she'd be queuing up at the cytoplasm centre with the rest of the economic supernumeraries.

Instead, I shifted my weight from my right leg to my left.

"This way please, Academician Varal," she said tonelessly.

Turning on her heel, she left the room and headed for the transfer lab with an even gait. I followed, with a growing nervousness. Down long, dimly lit corridors lined with observation bubbles, past transfer chambers where heavy lasers swung silently on electromagnetic arms we walked in silence. I suppose the woman's aloofness was understandable. In a little while, Academician Varal, AHUD 88590.3, Reader in Ialchasan Middle Classical History, was going to cease to exist. True, someone very like him was would be some thousands of years ago on a now dead world somewhere in the outer Magellenic Clouds, but for all intents and purposes, I would be no more for the Techno.

In the timeless hours I now have to devote to thought, I often travel back, or perhaps I should say forward, in my mind to those last few hours spent among my own kind. How dim and unreal that pan-temporal galactic civilization seems to me now, and yet how vividly I can recall the details of that now-distant moment in time and space. With my mind's eye I see that little stray strand of brown hair at the back of the Techno's pale, translucent neck. I smell the clean, antiseptic air of the Centre.

The pale green flicker of the stasis field as I was maneuvered, naked, into the scanning chamber. The eerie purplish light, and the warm, prickly feeling as the structures of my body were mapped and recorded.

Lights, sound, the tiny wrinkles in the corners of the Techno's eyes, the last I ever saw of humanity... and then the mnemo-personality scan, and Academician Varal, skilled violinist, dispassionate

lover, enthusiastic jilceau player, pious Anashthiac, winner of a third form poetry competition, went discontinuous. At times I try to remember the moment... that one, infinitesmally brief instant when I ceased to be. At times, I think I can just about recapture it... that strange sensation of having been. A past with no present or future.

It would be futile to try to trace my pilgrimage from there. At that point I was converted into information, data to be transferred. I could not perceive my situation: unaware, all the quadrillions of bits containing my genetic code, cytoplasmic reagents and mnemonic and personality codes were transmitted and stored while the great laser was carefully positioned.

Floating on a field that could adjust its angle to a precision limited only by the Uncertainty Principle, the multi-band device was aimed in just such a way that its beam, carrying all the information that made up me, would enter the first Event Horizon of a harnassed rotating black hole, deflecting through region two with a slight fourth-dimensional theta component: three thousand, four hundred and some odd years earlier, the deflected laser message was to have been received by a special unit on Ialchasa Three, and all that data would have been used to recreate Academician Varal precisely as he was on that day, in the distant future, when I went discontinuous.

It was a routine procedure, nearly everyone at the University had taken advantage of it, and it almost never went wrong. Not that I am dissatisfied with my lot, mind you. As I examine my recollections of life in that society, I realize how cold, petty, and parochial it really was. Smelling, seeing, touching, feeling... fine senses indeed, and ones I truly miss: and yet the image of the Techno's hard, uncaring features as I disintegrated into the abstract haunt me still.

No longer need I care about the thin carbon tissue of flesh, and the winding circuitous pathways of neurons through which I once saw the universe. What quirk of quantum probabilities, what wrinkle in the curve of space-time brought me here I cannot say, but neither do I care. Now I know only the satisfaction of gravitational collapse, the long slow penetrating depth of magnetic thought: I communicate with my companions over the vast deeps of space in luminous songs that span centuries in their discourse. We dance together in the folds of space, reaching out with our gravitational fields to touch one another's very souls. I've even gotten into plasma-density fluctuations.

G-B 8395-43, one of my colleagues, a spritely bachelor G-5 with a bit too much sodium absorption, was once a professor of Relativistic Archeo-ethno-techno-history at my University, and it is his opinion that every once in a while a time-space transfer beam intercepts the path of a star with the right magnetic resonances, and the menmo-personality data maps directly onto the star's extant magnetic thought structures.

Well, it is his field, so there may be something to what he says. As for myself, I think it's just karma... I should never have relegated the violin to second place in my studies -- clearly, I was always meant to be a star.

E.K.

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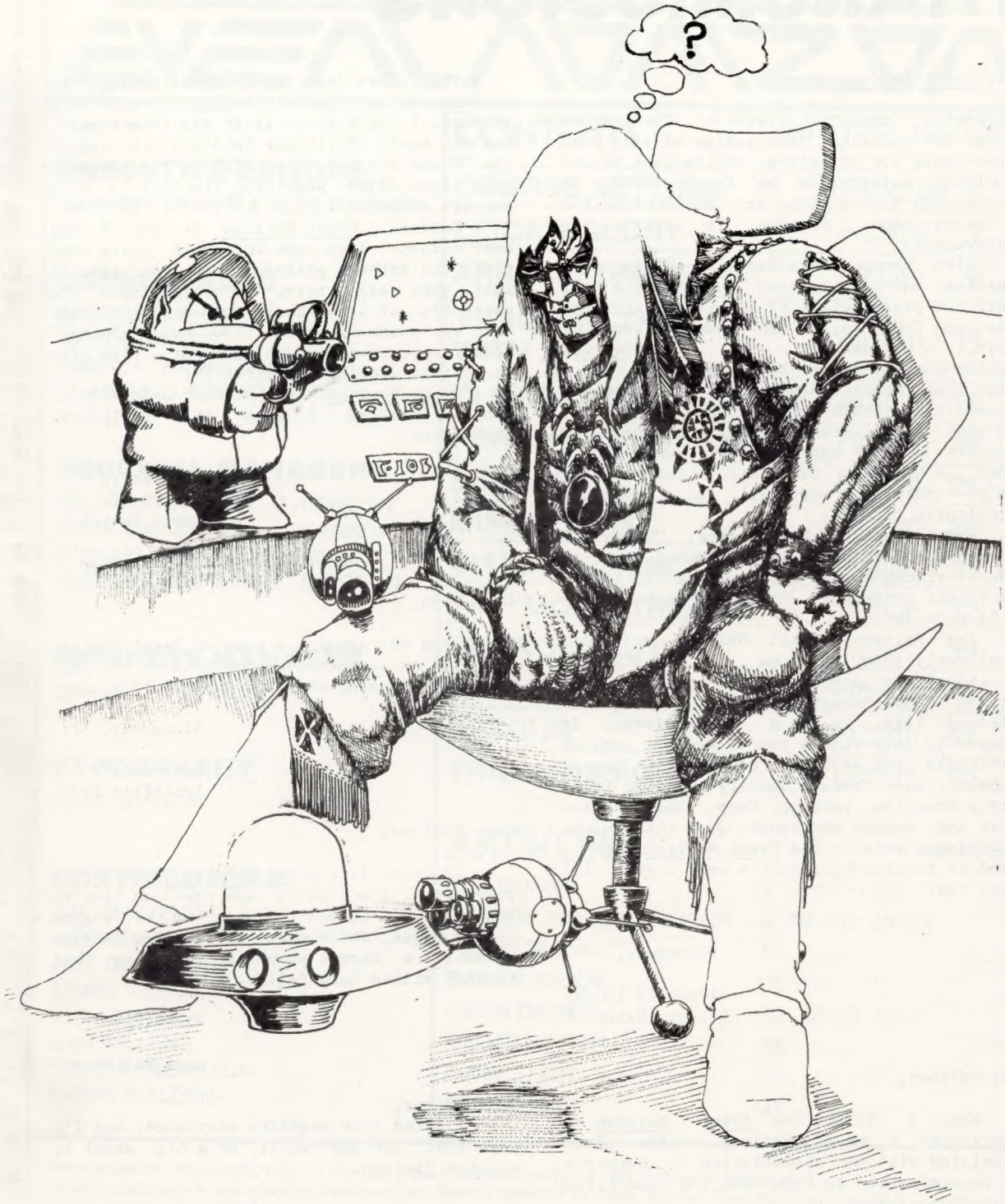


TRANSMISSIONS

Dear Event Horizon;

Impressive, truly impressive! The cover design and excellent logo design of your fine first issue are effective invitations to the excellent material to be found within. To obtain such high-quality art and stories for a first-issue fanzine is quite an achievement.

Alex Cannon, besides co-editing the magazine, has also managed to display a real flair for psychlogical SF in his two stories. "Analogue Computer, though somewhat vague at first, becomes an interesting machine-consciousness story that ends with a twist that takes a particularly dim view of the maniacal little tykes in Spock ears that run amok at science fiction conventions. My favorite of the two, however, was "Men's Room", a horribly fascinating tale of one man's putrid survival and eventual apocalyptic revenge.

Steve Popkes' short piece, "Mudball," though competantly written, seemed not to have a strong enough main premise to ignite the talent evident in his "Gingham Mountains on Blue Denim".

Roy Barrows' "Red Shift" was also excellently done, just the right length with a splendidly ironic final twist. Event Horizon shows every sign of a long and literary life. In it's first issue, it manages to interview a top SF writer, include a splendid art section (hang on to "Speed" Webber!), and feature quality fiction in a very attractive package. Keep those stories short and snappy and brush up a bit on the commisioned artwork and Event Horizon will be a modell fanzine before it's even a year old! Mazel tov!

Sincerely,

Alexander Yourk
Editor- Orion SF

Dear Editors,

When I first saw Event Horizon I experienced a warm feeling inside often associated with my appreciation of another's art or craft, and in this case the production of an SF magazine.

The cover was well distributed, the printing fine, and the logo serves it's purpose. I don't know if it was intentional, but the small serifs put into the left arm of the "V"and the top of the "I" in the contents page logo added something (to me) to it's overall effect.

Overall, Event Horizon is one of the best efforts I've come across in quite some time; the authors plainly have a good idea of what they are trying to accomplish. The portfolio of artwork in the middle of the zine was quite a welcome item. George "Speed" Webber appears as though he's got a firm grip on what he's doing artistically.

Event Horizon is a welcome addition to fanzine fandom; I wish it's publishers prosperity.

Sincerely,

Kevin Davies

Publisher: MIRIAD magazine

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for sending a copy of Event Horizon, it is an impressive publication. We look forward to seeing the next issue.

Sincerely,

Sid Ganis
LucasFilm Ltd.

Dear Editors,

It looks like Event Horizon is off to a fine start. I'm glad to see that one fanzine has finally solved the problem of ragged column edges, which make the average fanzine resemble a street pamphlet revealing that Kennedy killed Rockefeller.

Sincerely,

Carl Zeichner

Dear Editor,

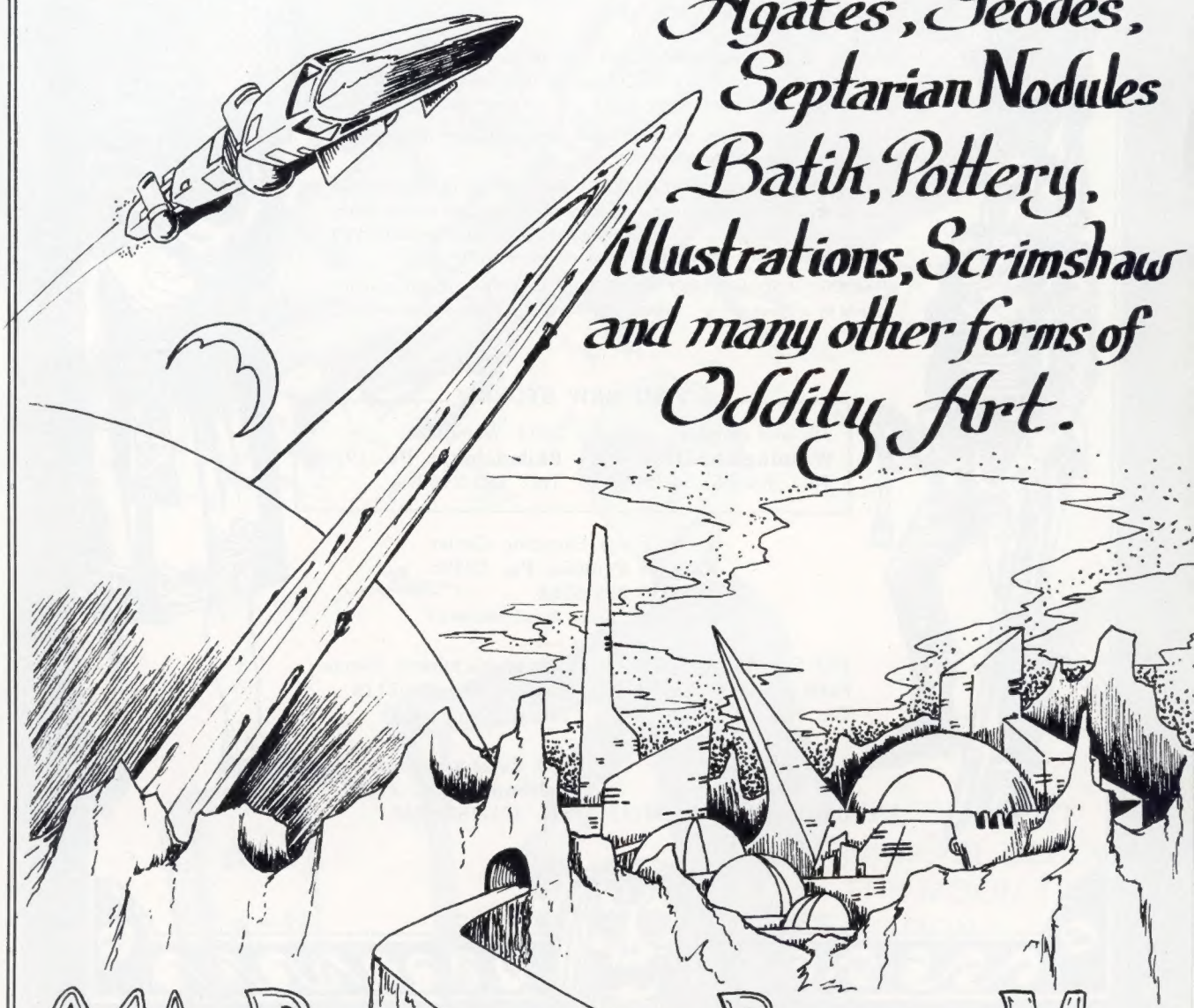
I liked your magazine very much, and I'm sure that one day you'll be a big wheel in science fiction.

Sincerely,

Isaac Asimov

ODDITY

A Different Kind of Store



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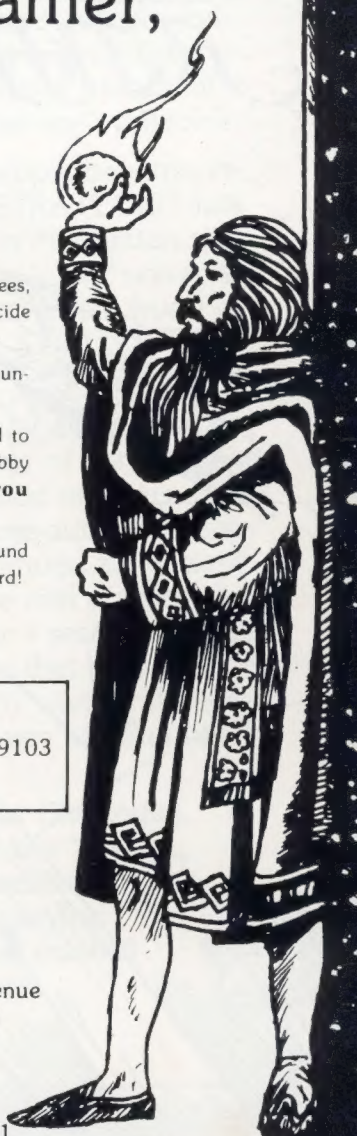

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